DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 366 862 CG 025 208

AUTHOR Bloland, Paul A.; And Others
TITLE Reform in Student Affairs: A Critique of Student Development.
INSTITUTION ERIC Clearinghouse on Counseling and Student Services, Greensboro, NC.
SPONS AGENCY Office of Educational Research and Improvement (ED), Washington, DC.
REPORT NO ISBN-1-56109-060-3
PUB DATE 94
CONTRACT RR93002004
NOTE 129p.
AVAILABLE FROM CAPS, Inc., School of Education, University of North Carolina at Greensboro, Greensboro, NC ($16.95).
PUB TYPE Guides - Non-Classroom Use (055) -- Information Analyses - ERIC Clearinghouse Products (071)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC06 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS College Students; *Educational Change; Higher Education; *Student Development; Student Needs; *Student Personnel Services; Student Personnel Workers

ABSTRACT

This monograph provides an intensive examination of the student development movement in college student affairs. Chapter I examines student development as a reform movement within the field of student affairs in higher education. Chapter II challenges the assertion that student development as conceptualized in its seminal documents represents a new philosophical foundation and rationale for the field of student affairs. Chapter III raises a number of significant questions regarding current student development theories and the way they have been implemented on the college campus, employing six criteria of effective theory as an assessment template. Chapter IV discusses research on student development, particularly inquiries into the efficacy of student development interventions, and makes a series of observations regarding the research problems noted. Chapter V critiques the non-research literature of student development, looking particularly at journal articles, textbooks, and practitioner-oriented books. Chapter VI discusses the relationship between current student development theory and practice, the contributions of theory, and the problems that the use of student development theory has created for the field of student affairs. Chapter VII concludes the critique by pulling the previous six chapters together and offering a vision of an alternative paradigm for the student affairs field, one that places it firmly within the context of the mission of higher education while avoiding many of the problems noted in the evaluation of the current fledgling paradigm of student development. (NB)

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A CRITIQUE OF STUDENT DEVELOPMENT

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Reform in Student Affairs:

A Critique of Student Development

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ISBN 1-56109-060-3

This publication was prepared with partial funding from the Office of Educational Research and Improvement, U.S. Department of Education. The opinions expressed in this report do not necessarily reflect the positions or policies of OERI, the Department of Education, or ERIC/CASS.

Preface

In the redesign of the ERIC/CAPS Clearinghouse to implement the many new emphases and priorities which we wished to see represented, special effort was devoted to giving increased attention to college student services and student development. Student services have always been a focus of ours, but the breadth of our scope and coverage has all too frequently resulted in our being less able to devote the time and attention to student services than we desired.

With the move from the University of Michigan to the University of North Carolina at Greensboro and the beginning of a new contract for the Clearinghouse, we made sure in our planning that student services would receive the priority which we believed it should. The clearest external manifestation of this increased prioritization for student services was our name change from the ERIC Clearinghouse on Counseling and Personnel Services (CAPS) to the ERIC Clearinghouse on Counseling and Student Services (CASS). Both in work and action we intend to provide greater coverage of student services.

The first expression of our new focus is the publication of this monograph. Increasing the *breadth* of our coverage of the student development and student affairs literature is an important goal for us, but we are particularly concerned that we broker compelling and challenging new ideas and concepts. This monograph well represents the role we wish to play—presenting information and ideas which challenge and confront existing policies and practices. It is hard-hitting and provides an overdue revisiting of existing thinking regarding student development and student affairs. Whether one agrees with the authors' central premises or not is not as important as the

need for anyone who wishes to be knowledgeable about student development to have grappled with the concepts and challenges they present irrespective of what position they personally espouse. A reader will clearly be the wiser and hopefully more thoughtful for having absorbed their message.

It is our real hope that this monograph will be the first in a series of publications relating to student development and student affairs. We would be most pleased if this increased attention by us to student services led to persons not only using the publications we develop but especially to seeing CASS as a desirable outlet and means for the dissemination of their own scholarly writing and research. We welcome comments and proposals regarding publications at any time. We believe we can be a highly effective way to help you communicate your ideas as well as learn from what others are saying. Please tell us!

Garry R. Walz, Ph.D.
Director
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Reform In Student Affairs:
A Critique Of Student Development

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Introduction

To begin a critique, it is essential foremost to place the focus of the critique squarely upon the table. Here our difficulty begins. Student development is a slippery term. For some, it is the central purpose of higher education—in the classroom and out—and, therefore, is the rightful end of all institutional means (curriculum, programming, environmental design, staffing, etc.). For others, it is the special educational domain of the field of student affairs and, as such, represents a particular reform of the field's historic contribution in light of developmental theory (*i.e.*, the natural biological unfolding of ability and personality). For yet others, it is merely a synonym for the field of student affairs in which business as usual prevails and the nuances of philosophical differences are viewed as "much ado about nothing."

In this monograph, our intent is to visit the second scenario in juxtaposition with the first and third in order to stimulate discussion regarding the relative merits and continued role of the student development movement within student affairs. Because of the existing confusion about the use and meaning of student development, there is a need for us to define our use of the term. By *student development theory*, we mean the body of theory and associated concepts that attempts to explain the process of human development as it may apply to the growth and development of college students of any age. We use the term, *student development model*, to refer to the concept of employing student development theory as the basis for devising program interventions that are intended to result in developmental gains. The terms, *student development* and *student development movement*, are employed interchangeably to describe the educational reform movement within the field

of student affairs which has been evolving since the early 1970s and which has become the official core philosophy for the student affairs field, at least as it is represented by the American College Personnel Association (ACPA) (1983, p. 179). By *higher education* we mean the entire institution of post-secondary education, specifically that represented by our two- and four-year colleges and universities; and *student affairs* is the field (once called *student personnel work*) charged with providing extracurricular or cocurricular programs and services in support, and/or augmentation, of the broader higher education experience.

As Bloland (1986c) has pointed out, the student development movement and its philosophy was wholeheartedly accepted and incorporated into the teaching and practice of the student affairs field without a dissenting voice or a critical examination of its principal tenets, claims, or procedures. A review of the literature on student development reveals very little in the way of analysis or critical examination of the nascent movement. Student development was simply adopted and incorporated into the field's thinking and practice with very few voices asking, "Wait a moment. What makes student development the answer to our problems? Let's look at both the pros and cons before we commit our field to its promises."

So it is with considerable trepidation, and perhaps no little courage, that we seek through this monograph to make a half-life appraisal of the current status of the dominant student development paradigm in student affairs as it has evolved over the past twenty some years. While our original intent had been to construct an objective critique, one with balance and objectivity, as a result of our detailed examination of the history and literature of the movement, we have emerged as skeptics. Practically all that has been written has been in support of student development. Few professionals have attempted to raise questions concerning its foundations, goals, and methods. It is not our purpose, however, to undo all that has been accomplished by adherence to student development principles. Instead, it is our intent to raise some of the questions and

confront some of the issues that should have been addressed routinely as student development gradually became the raison d'etre of many professional staff, departments, and divisions in the student affairs field.

This monograph originated from a symposium the authors conducted at the national convention of the American College Personnel Association in Atlanta, Georgia in 1991, which in turn was inspired in part by Bloland's 1986 papers (1986a, 1986b, 1986c) and by the article authored by Stamatakos and Rogers (1984), "Student Affairs: A Profession in Need of a Philosophy." At that symposium, we presented a series of critical papers that eventually formed the core of these several chapters. The program appeared to be well received and many in attendance expressed a hope that we would eventually make our ideas available to a wider audience. Garry Walz, director of ERIC/CASS was interested in our early writing and encouraged us to expand a first draft into a full monograph.

We believe that the time is long overdue for a critical and informed examination of the student development movement and philosophy. Through these chapters we hope to stimulate others to take their own critical look and to engender a discussion, if not a debate, about the present course and future evolution of the student affairs field.

We also believe that the field may be on the threshold of another redefinition, perhaps even a paradigm shift as Kuh (Kuh, Whitt, & Shedd, 1987) might put it. It is our hope, however, that whatever new reform emerges, it will be subjected to the kind of critical analysis and examination that the student development reform has not received during its first two decades. Educators, be they in elementary, secondary, or higher education, are all too prone to adopt the latest well-packaged innovation in educational philosophy or practice and then transform it into *the* program or perspective that will save education. Student affairs professionals are not immune to this bandwagon effect, and the uncritical widespread adoption of student development by the field is but one example.

Our argument is not with student development per se. It is rather with our fellow professionals (and, yes, we are guilty as well!) who failed to exercise their critical faculties to raise questions about student development, to slow down the headlong pace of its engulfment of the field of student affairs, and to examine alternatives and options as they presented themselves. Perhaps it is too early in the life of the movement to adopt a critical attitude. Perhaps the movement needs more time to overcome some of the problems we have noted in these chapters. However, unless these problems are noted and efforts mobilized to deal with them, the student development movement, failing to appreciate or correct its deficiencies, will mutate into an ideology with dissent muted or stifled and the field's credibility left to suffer all the more.

In Chapter I, we examine student development as a reform movement within the field of student affairs in higher education. The roots of the movement are traced through a brief historical survey leading into a discussion of nine disquieting concerns about the concept and the movement.

In Chapter II, we challenge the assertion that student development as conceptualized in its seminal documents represents a new philosophical foundation and rationale for the field of student affairs. We measure the document, "Student Development Services in Post-Secondary Education," against four components of a professional philosophy.

In Chapter III, we raise a number of significant questions regarding current student development theories and the way they have been implemented on the college campus, employing six criteria of effective theory as an assessment template. In Chapter IV, we discuss research on student development, particularly inquiries into the efficacy of student development interventions, and make a series of observations regarding the research problems noted.

We use Chapter V to critique the non-research literature of student development, looking particularly at journal articles, textbooks, and practitioner-oriented books. We then offer a set of standards that we believe should be met if the literature of our field is to have an effect on practice.

In Chapter VI, we discuss the relationship between current student development theory and practice, the contributions of theory, and the problems that the use of student development theory has created for the field of student affairs.

And, finally, in Chapter VII, we conclude our critique by pulling these six chapters together and offering a vision of an alternative paradigm for the student affairs field, one that places it firmly within the context of the mission of higher education while avoiding many of the problems that we have noted in our evaluation of the current fledgling paradigm of student development.

We hope that you will enjoy reading and thinking about the issues and concerns we have advanced—or at least find them thought-provoking. Make no mistake about it—we intend to challenge your thinking, even as our collaboration most certainly challenged ours.

Paul A. Bloland
Louis Stamatakos
Russell R. Rogers

January 1994

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Chapter I

Student Development as a Reform Movement in Student Affairs

The purpose of this chapter is to critique student development as a reform movement in the field of student affairs and higher education. It is not our intent to question the proposition that the full growth and development of college and university students is a worthwhile goal—we firmly believe that it is. However, we believe that it is time to examine in a critical fashion the premises of the student development movement and its effect upon the field of student affairs, an examination that has not been conducted to date, but one that is long overdue.

As pointed out by Miller and Winston (1991), there are many meanings of student development: a body of knowledge, "a wide variety of behavioral and social science-based interventions" (p. 25), "the outcome desired as a result of a student's attendance at college" (p. 26), and as a synonym for student services or student affairs. However, we also see it as a social movement, as a concerted and organized attempt within the professional field of student affairs to reform the philosophic underpinnings of the field and the ways in which professionals conceptualize their work with students on the college campus. This reform movement has been well received in the field and its principal tenets have been widely disseminated through the literature, in preparation programs, at workshops and conventions, and by word of mouth. That the student

development movement has had a profound impact upon the field of college student affairs cannot be denied. But why was reform needed and how did student development theory become the vehicle for reform?

A Brief History of the Student Development Reform Movement

The historical antecedents of the student development reform movement can be identified in the gradually evolving field of college student personnel work as its early leaders began slowly and laboriously to frame a philosophical and educational rationale for their work. They were not content with simply managing a program of student services. They wanted, and needed, a more significant role for their work, one that would be clearly recognized as a contribution to higher education in its own right and not simply as support for the classroom experience.

As early as 1926, the American Council on Education (ACE) sponsored a survey by L. B. Hopkins (1926) to ascertain what colleges and universities were doing to help students to develop as individuals. In 1931, R. C. Clothier (1931) presented a report to the American College Personnel Association (ACPA) that formally introduced the "whole student" philosophy to the nascent field. The spirit of the Clothier report was later incorporated into the original statement of the philosophy of the Student Personnel Point of View (American Council on Education [ACE], 1937), a philosophy that placed emphasis, "upon the development of the student as a person rather than upon his intellectual training alone" (p. 1). This theme resurfaced in the 1949 revision of the Student Personnel Point of View: "The development of students as whole persons interacting in social situations is the central concern of student personnel work and other agencies of education" (American Council on Education, 1949, p. 1).

These early pioneers were, explicitly or implicitly, convinced of the educational potency of the extracurriculum. The notion that student personnel work is more than the administration

of student services, that total and full-rounded education and development is a legitimate concern of higher education, is not new but is a theme that surfaced in the publications of many of the authorities writing over thirty years ago. Williamson (1961), for example, talked about how "we differ from teachers in our educational role; we deal with students as individuals and groups of individuals who are concerned with many aspects of their own development. In a sense, this is the curriculum of student personnel work—the student's own full development" (p. 19).

C. Gilbert Wrenn, in his widely used textbook, *Student Personnel Work in College* (1951), stated it this way: "Institutions of higher education are responsible for developing in their students, essential interpersonal skills and understandings as well as civic, vocational, and personal knowledge and skills" (p. 25). Kate Hevner Mueller, in her 1961 text, *Student Personnel Work in Higher Education*, discussed the "theory of developmental tasks" and outlined "three major developmental tasks in the college years": (a) integrating and stabilizing the "self," (b) identifying all the different roles one may play, and (c) practicing and evaluating the activities and attitudes necessary for future roles (pp. 108-116).

These references are cited simply to point out that the notion that the full resources of institutions of higher education ought to have an influence on the growth and development of the whole student has been an integral tenet of the student personnel field for at least sixty years—well before the advent of the student development movement.

Was, then, the student development movement of the late 1960s and early 1970s merely old wine in new bottles as some critics have maintained? On the contrary, what was purportedly new about the student development movement was that, first, university staff should intentionally introduce "proactive" programs, called interventions, to promote student development; and, second, that the nature and content of these interventions and their outcomes could be specified by designing them in conformance with an appropriate theory of human development.

How did this shift in emphasis come about? Some trace it back to the autumn of 1964 when a student affairs dean at the University of California, Berkeley unilaterally prohibited the placement of political tables in front of Sather Gate on September 29th. The resulting sit-in and demonstration kicked off a seven-year student challenge to university rules and authority, not only at Berkeley but throughout the United States.

The members of the student affairs staff became the front-line troops for the universities because they had claimed to be experts on students and student behavior and had carried as one of their functions a responsibility for the oversight and control of student behavior—one among many other duties to be sure—but now a key one as students now began to flout university regulations and to question the authority of university staff. Dealing with the manifestations of the nation-wide student revolt became the primary role of student affairs administrators—and of presidents as well—for years after 1964.

As the campus world was gradually transformed and the role of higher education itself was undergoing critical scrutiny, the leadership of the American College Personnel Association began to realize that the old patterns of student/university relationships were no longer going to be operative, that there was a need to rethink, to reconceptualize the role of student affairs if there was even going to be a role after the student revolution. It became increasingly clear that simply coordinating and managing a disparate collection of services without a redefined educational function that made sense to the university community would no longer suffice, particularly with the control function so radically changed.

As early as 1966, ACPA President Ralph Berdie (Berdie, 1966) raised the question of a need for a redefinition of student personnel work, and in 1968 President Donald Hoyt appointed a committee to define a new direction for the field. Clyde Parker, a member of that committee, responded with a series of papers that called for the creation of a theory of student development.

It was out of this milieu that the student development movement grew as explicated in three seminal documents, all issued or published in 1972: the report issued by the Council of Student Personnel Associations in Higher Education (COSPA), "Student Development Services in Post-Secondary Education" (1975); Brown's ACPA Monograph, *Student Development in Tomorrow's Higher Education—A Return to the Academy* (1972), and the statement by the Higher Education (T.H.E.) Project of the American College Personnel Association (ACPA) entitled, *A Student Development Model for Student Affairs in Tomorrow's Higher Education* (American College Personnel Association, 1975).

The goal of the T.H.E. Project, and the core of the concerns of the ACPA leadership, was stated in the foreword to Brown's monograph:

> *The essence of the Project is an attempt to reconceptualize college student personnel work in a way that will provide a measure of creative impact from our profession toward the shaping of the higher education of the future. By reconceptualization we mean the systematic reconstruction of our fundamental conceptions as to the specific roles, functions, methods, and procedures that will characterize future professional practice. (Brown, 1972, p. 4)*

The outgrowth of the T.H.E. Project was the adoption and promotion of student development as the much-needed reconceptualization sought by ACPA, capped by the 1976 publication of the Miller and Prince book, *The Future of Student Affairs: A Guide to Student Development for Tomorrow's Higher Education*.

Plato, in an essay that deserves much wider attention than it received at the time (1978), critiqued the incipient student development movement using as her framework the reform cycle described by Lowi (1964). She stated:

> *A "crisis" develops and current theory is not adequate for proposing a solution. The "old" approach is condemned*

> *and a "new" approach is advanced. The new approach is met with enthusiasm because the group has a specific need to change. The new approach becomes the dominant approach as the need for change is satisfied. There is no additional movement to find other alternatives, because the need for change has been satisfied. Proponents of the new approach can instigate very minimal reforms or they can eventually fall back into former practices without notice. The approach prevails longer than it is applicable and a new crisis develops. (Plato, 1978, p. 34)*

That is essentially what happened. The crisis was the perceived changes in the functions of student affairs staff. The old approach, student personnel work, was subtly or directly denigrated as inappropriate and outdated. The new approach, student development, was embraced and the process of selling it was aggressively pursued with very little, if any, opposition or even questioning. Because the need for reform had been satisfied with the acceptance of student development, there were no alternatives offered. The new literature engendered by the concept served simply to reinforce it, not to in any way question or challenge it. And the latest chapter in the total commitment of the American College Personnel Association to the concept seemed to be written in 1987 when the *Journal of College Student Personnel* was renamed the *Journal of College Student Development*.

So today we have a professional association that "regards human development as the commonly held core of the profession" (American College Personnel Association, 1983, p. 179), a journal that has apparently reoriented its traditional focus from the general concerns of the broad student affairs field to concentrate on student development, and a profession that has committed its future to a version of its mission that has not yet proven itself and, in fact, as we will point out, has failed markedly to accomplish its major goals.

Some Concerns About the Student Development Reform Movement

The rapid and uncritical adoption of the student development approach by the field of college student personnel work as it was called at that time, meant that the usual process of subjecting a new idea to the comparative analysis, questioning, and testing that would assure its optimal usefulness and stability never occurred. The concept was developed and promulgated by its instigators with little grass-roots involvement or critical appraisal. Student development took possession of the field like a quasi-religious conversion, becoming in the process an ideological lodestar which the profession followed without much reflection or analysis. As Plato (1978) said, "The new approach becomes the dominant approach as the need for change is satisfied" (p. 34).

As will be pointed out throughout this monograph, we have a number of problems or concerns with student development as it is currently conceptualized. However, in this chapter our focus is on the effects of the movement itself and the model of student affairs it articulates. What has it accomplished? Has it fallen short of its early promise? The nine points that follow represent some of our major concerns but they by no means exhaust the possibilities.

First, student development appears focused on the personal development of the individual seemingly detached from the paramount educational responsibility of our institutions of higher learning. The central role of education and learning is barely acknowledged by either the COSPA (1975) or the T.H.E. student development models (ACPA, 1975). The tone of these documents, particularly the COSPA statement, is almost nonacademic. Colleges just seem to be handy places for young people to develop (grow up). And when student affairs professionals talk about "human development as the commonly held core of the profession," (ACPA, 1983, p. 179) are they not by implication abandoning the field's traditional roots in the student community and higher education? Human beings develop anywhere, in or out of college, with or without professional

assistance. Certainly the student affairs field cannot have taken on the task of human development in the population at large—divorced from the academy?

Second, the student development movement is an unsuccessful attempt to create the substance of an expertise. It has borrowed from developmental psychology to provide a theoretical base for the field; it has coined a properly incomprehensible terminology; it has created several roles for practitioners which, as far as we can determine, exist for the most part only in the literature, *i.e.*, campus ecology manager (Banning, 1989), student development educator (Brown, 1989), and student development specialist (ACPA, 1975); it has introduced developmental theory and practice into the professional preparation programs; its adherents have produced an increasingly voluminous literature; and it has canonized its gurus, folk heroes, and mythic figures. And yet, despite all of this frantic activity, these many attempts to create a recognizable and coherent discipline, the rest of the campus seems little impressed, if they have taken notice at all.

As Bloland (1979) said, reflecting upon this lack of progress toward academic respectability:

> *We have cultivated an expertise that was not requested, is not sought out, and for which there is little recognition or demand. Many entry-level and not a few seasoned professionals know little of student development theory and practice and, in fact, do not really need such expertise to meet the role expectations of their supervisors or, in too many instances, their institutions. (p. 1)*

In a sense, then, it would not really matter how "expert" we became in our student development specialty—there is little campus demand for that expertise.

Third, student development was supposed to lend a note of intellectual plausibility to the student affairs enterprise and, thus, lead to greater acceptance of its campus role by the academic establishment. While the idea of applying developmental

knowledge to shape the nature of higher education has become increasingly discussed and accepted in higher education circles (*e.g.*, Chickering [1981], Pascarella & Terenzini [1991], Astin [1992]), there is little evidence that the student affairs version of student development has been a significant part of that discussion. Most of the cited research has originated from outside of the world of student affairs per se and even that body of research does not, for the most part, lend itself to attempts to use the accumulated knowledge to frame so-called developmental interventions to effect growth in narrow, carefully delimited, variables. In other words, the practical version of development advocated so eloquently by the student development movement within student affairs has had little effect upon even those faculty and administrators who accept developmental goals for the academy and, therefore, has not been the key to opening the gates to greater acceptance in the academy as originally hoped.

Fourth, despite the field's seemingly wholesale conversion to student development, the research evidence in its support is sparse (see Chapter IV). Should the field of student affairs have committed its destiny as a profession to a paradigm that it is unable to validate? Until research begins to demonstrate that student development interventions do indeed bring about the hypothesized, theory-driven effects, we would do well to acknowledge that, for the most part, we are essentially operating in the theater of faith and goodwill rather than on the rules of evidence.

Fifth, if our research into student development is at such a primitive stage, how can we then, with any degree of assurance, assert that our carefully planned program interventions bring about desired outcomes? Among all of the competing stimuli on the campus, many of them powerful and uncontrolled, what can be the effect of our planned program interventions which last only a few hours or days at the most?

Imagine a developmental vector, say Chickering's task of developing purpose (Chickering, 1969) as operationalized by the SDTI-2 (Winston, Miller, & Prince, 1979) subtask of mature career plans. Using this vector as the theory base for

our intervention, the current status of a group of students is assessed via the SDTI-2, they are enrolled in a career development program running for two hours once a week for three months, and they are then retested with the SDTI-2 in the final session. Are these students now more capable of developing mature career plans? They may well be more knowledgeable because of the cognitive content of the workshop but to say that they have integrated the lessons learned into their developing personalities and characters so that they have made a developmentally significant or lasting shift is presumptuous to say the least. As noted by Pascarella and Terenzini (1991), "most theoretical models of development in no way guarantee that any single experience will be an important determinant of change for all students" (p. 610).

This caveat not withstanding, the building of programs on the basis of developmental theory is as good a method of planning student programs as any other and will probably result in no serious harm to the participants. The student participants may learn from it just as they do from a class in accounting or organic chemistry, but to claim that one six-hour program has actuated accelerated and significant growth on the *Mature Career Plan* dimension is at best premature and, at worst, fatuous. We do not believe that this mode of operating is going to appreciably impress our academic colleagues or provosts.

Sixth, while student development may have provided the student affairs practitioner with a theoretical justification or rationale for the systematic program planning of student services programs, it is not at all clear that the inclusion of a theory component has in itself materially improved campus programming. While systematic program planning was by no means an innovation of the student development movement, student development's contribution to planning was the articulation and dissemination of procedures and models of effective program planning, presumably in relation to developmental theory.

The literature in support of the student development movement yields two impressions: (1) much of what is advocated as

good planning would represent good planning—with or without the inclusion of student development theory and, (2) despite the continual advocacy of student development theory as essential for program planning, very little of a practical, nuts-and-bolts nature, is presented for translating theory into campus programs. The path from theory to practice is fraught with unexplained and uncontrolled variance and the variables themselves are so complex that we are not at all certain any more that the introduction of theory has added much to student affairs programming that was not present before. In fact, theory may well have complicated and mystified the process of programming without materially improving it. As noted above the evidence for theory-based programming is not impressive.

Seventh, we are concerned also about the "law of universal applicability," a hypothetical law which states that any specific developmental theory or theory-based intervention ought to apply to most institutions or to most situations. If there is indeed a student development effect, it may apply only to a particular type of college that has defined its mission and goals appropriately, or only to narrowly-focused programs, or only to first year 18-year old students, or only when the moon is full. There may be no generalized student development effect at all which means that any attempt to identify the developmental potency of a college environment, with its many, often conflicting internal stimuli, may be difficult, if not impossible. Or perhaps we will learn that a particular theory will work only under certain narrowly specified and highly artificial circumstances, not readily replicable.

Our *eighth* concern with the student development movement pertains to its evolution from an exciting, cutting edge innovation in student affairs to its current status as the established or politically correct doctrine in the field. In short, and as Bloland asserted (1986a, 1986b), student development as a reform movement has suffered from: (a) a dearth of dissent enroute to its acceptance by the field, (b) a distressing gap between its promise and present day reality, and (c) a lack of any sort of critical examination of

the principles, models, and paradigms that have come to denote student development.

Our argument is not with the concept or process of student development as a worthwhile goal for higher education. College students, young people or adults, are going to grow and change whether or not the student affairs staff attempts to affect that growth in some relatively benign ways. The evidence is overwhelming that college does indeed have an effect upon students (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991; Astin, 1992). Our concern, rather, is with student development, unexamined and untested, yet anointed as the sole vehicle of salvation for the field of student affairs. We believe that the field, particularly as represented by the American College Personnel Association, has prematurely embraced the concept of student development as the unifying theme or theoretical thread that ties the professional field together. The net result has been that other paradigms or perspectives have not emerged in the face of the overwhelming dominance of the movement, particularly as evidenced by the conformity apparent in the convention programs, the journal selections, and the general publications in the field.

And, *ninth*, if these weren't problems enough, Kuh, Whitt, and Shedd (1987), in their provocative monograph, *Student Affairs Work, 2001: A Paradigmatic Odyssey*, challenged a series of basic assumptions upon which the student development movement is based. We have just been picking away at the surface. They practically nullified it.

In their monograph, Kuh et al. (1987) have contrasted two paradigms: one, the conventional paradigm or Old Story, is mechanistic and linear, characterized by objectivity, control, and causality; and the other, the emergent paradigm, or New Story, is characterized by conditions of uncertainty, mutual shaping, ambiguity, and multiple realities. Citing the emergent paradigm, two of the assumptions that they challenged are particularly relevant to this critique.

For example, the student development movement presumes that "human development is patterned, orderly, and predictable,

and, therefore, controllable to some degree" (Kuh et al., 1987, p. 32), but the emergent paradigm, or New Story, suggests that development may not be as orderly or predictable as we have thought. Every student is unique and develops at different rates and the pattern of that development cannot be anticipated or predicted. Furthermore, the student development model presupposes that "student affairs staff can systematically design and implement interventions to intentionally facilitate students' development" (p. 35) that "intervention is better than nonintervention" (p. 35) and that "proaction is preferable to reaction" (p. 35). But if student development is not as predictable and orderly as the model has assumed, how can proactive and systematic program interventions bring about any specific and intended developmental change? Developmental change is more likely to be linked to chance than to theory-based interventions.

What does this emergent paradigm, assuming that it is real, mean to student affairs staff, particularly those who work within the student development paradigm? Kuh et al. (1987) stated that we in student affairs must not succumb to the tendency to try to influence or to understand the complex behavior of students and colleagues in terms that are too simple or mechanistic. We are faced with not one reality, but multiple realities and no one or even several theories working in concert will suffice.

Kuh et al. (1987) went on to state that "student development theory provides the illusion of exerting control over what is essentially an indeterminate, unpatterned process" (p. 45). Theory is useful to "anticipate and respond to certain issues that seem to be typical of students at different ages" (p. 45), but we should not let our understanding of theory blind us to the unanticipated variety of behaviors that can actually occur. "We must shed the conventional notion that development can be facilitated or somehow engineered" (p. 50), and we must become comfortable with conflict, chance, and unpredictable and evolutionary change. Of course, Kuh, Whitt, and Shedd may simply be positioning themselves as the leaders of yet

another reform cycle but, if they are correct, the claims inherent within the current student development paradigm regarding theory-based program interventions may be fundamentally flawed.

Although not intended to be exhaustive, these nine points of concern regarding student development as a reform movement begin to call into question some of its explicit and inherent assumptions and precepts. In the remaining chapters, we examine in some depth the philosophy, theory, research, literature, and practice of student development, concluding with a call for the field of student affairs to reconsider its role in American higher education.

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Chapter II

A Challenge to Student Development as a Philosophy

Ever since the publication of *Student Development in Post-Secondary Education* by the Council of Student Personnel Associations (COSPA) in 1975, arguments and debates have ensued as to whether this document: (a) was a statement of philosophy for student affairs; (b) was a philosophical replacement for the near-universally accepted *The Student Personnel Point of View* (American Council on Education [ACE], 1949) which for decades had served as a philosophy; (c) was to be accepted as a document in tandem with the Student Personnel Point of View as a working paper for the field; or (d) was, as some argued, "old wine in new bottles," and not to be taken seriously as being in competition with the Student Personnel Point of View (Appleton, Briggs, & Rhatigan, 1978).

To compound the confusion, albeit not intentionally, the 1987 publication of *A Perspective on Student Affairs* by the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA) created a furor in the field as some claimed that it was a new statement of philosophy for the profession. This averment disregarded the intended audience for the NASPA document (college presidents and other officers in higher education administration) as well as overlooked NASPA's own disclaimer of the document as a statement of philosophy.

The purpose of this chapter is to examine and challenge assertions that student development, as expressed or espoused as a philosophical or theoretical framework

in the COSPA document, is an adequate statement of professional philosophy for the student affairs field.

During the seventeen some years since the dissemination of the COSPA document, and despite thousands of illuminating as well as obfuscating words spent upon this matter, it appears as though we have not yet reached consensus on a statement or combination of statements that the field of student affairs can accept as its professional philosophy. This melange of viewpoints has exerted a powerful influence upon the manner in which we in the profession perceive ourselves, our goals and functions, and our activities in higher education. This unresolved controversy has resulted in all manner of difficulty, confusion, and acrimony in the way in which the field has developed ethical standards (American College Personnel Association [ACPA], 1981), standards for professional preparation and practice (Council for the Advancement of Standards for Student Services/Development Programs [CAS], 1986), and a commonality of perspectives through which student affairs staff members carry out their day-to-day campus responsibilities. In short, it is fair to say that we in the profession have been denied a Hegelian "zeitgeist" through which to put our entire house into rational order because we have failed to resolve the essential question of which statement best represents the philosophy and foundations of the student affairs profession.

Components of a Profession's Philosophy

In an attempt to resolve the question of whether or not student affairs actually possessed a professional philosophy, and whether The Student Personnel Point of View (SPPV) (American Council on Education, 1949), or the document, "Student Development Services in Post-Secondary Education" (SDSPSE) (Council of Student Personnel Associations in Higher Education, 1975), best served this purpose, Stamatakos and Rogers (1984) developed a comparative analysis of the two statements. They attempted to determine if either document, when examined against four

components of a professional philosophy, constituted a sound statement of such a philosophy.

The work of Stamatakos and Rogers offers one of the few contemporary analytical examinations of student affairs philosophy to be found in the profession's literature which used philosophical criteria and concepts to determine the adequacy of the two documents as professional philosophy. It should be noted that we have had nearly a decade to study the implications of their analysis and to reflect upon the second decade of the student development movement. Thus, it is appropriate for the purposes of this chapter to present a summary of their findings and conclusions. If the reader accepts their basic premises and manner of analysis, their conclusion, that student development is not a philosophy, readily follows. To highlight our conclusions we also have provided our estimate of how well the student development model has or has not met each of the four philosophical criteria of Stamatakos and Rogers: Basic Principles, Values, Role and Functions, and Identity.

A Profession's Basic Principles

The first component of a professional philosophy entails the identification and explanation of what the profession considers as its "first or basic principles." In student affairs, these are derived from assumptions and hypotheses regarding three fundamental ingredients that any philosophy of higher education or student services ought to incorporate: the role and purpose of institutions of higher education, the human nature of students, and the educational relationship between the two, *i.e.*, learning.

With respect to the basic principles, unlike the SPPV, the student development document (SDSPSE) suffers significantly by comparison in that it almost completely ignores the mission, goals, and roles of higher education in relation to its societal context and the expectations society has for its collegiate institutions and their graduates. As noted by Stamatakos and Rogers (1984), "Contrary to assertions that the SDSPSE builds upon the basic premises of the SPPV, the

SDSPSE only acknowledges the existence of the SPPV in its introduction" (p. 402).

According to the student development perspective, as delineated in the SDSPSE, student affairs appears to take on a primacy of its own apart from the context within which its validity rests—the academic purposes of the university. Student development emphasizes the student to the exclusion of other institutional purposes and sees higher education only as a means by which to develop students who have unlimited potential, who are self-directed, and who become self-fulfilled. The student becomes self-fulfilled through the knowledge that is explored and the integration of experiences that occurs through social interaction within collegiate institutions and the context of lifelong education.

By omission or commission, the SDSPSE's version of student development ignores or deems as unimportant the collegiate institution's responsibilities for preserving, transmitting, and enriching the culture, for creating new knowledge, or for educating students toward being responsible participants in society and contributing to its improvement. Thus, it is inferred that life takes on meaning and substance through means other than the rigorous choices of intellectual and moral values that lie at the core of the missions and societal relationships of collegiate institutions. To subordinate institutions and society out of deference to the self-fulfillment of the individual student is to miss the essential relationship between the two.

In our opinion, the SDSPSE only minimally satisfies the terms of the first component—the identification and explanation of the profession's basic principles.

A Profession's Values

Values, the second component of a profession's philosophy, emanates from the first component even as it informs the first component (Basic Principles). Values both evolve from basic principles and maintain them. These values are derived from that which we hold to be a preferable state for the three fundamental ingredients or basic premises of the field—the institution of higher education, students, and learning.

In examining student development against the component of values, student development was again found seriously wanting. Not surprisingly, it is deficient on this component for fundamentally the same reasons it was deficient in Basic Principles. Student development sees higher education as an environment within which the individual may develop but ignores notions of institutional responsibility for contributing to society, to the fostering of democracy and democratic ideals, to international understanding, or, for that matter, to helping students become responsible and contributing members of society. Nor does student development view students as either sharing this responsibility with collegiate institutions, or accepting any such responsibility for themselves. In short, the institution as a context or socially responsible agency in and of itself is viewed as incidental at worst or subordinate to the student at best.

Parenthetically, this appeal to the supremacy of the individual can be traced to the rise of the cult of the unaccountable individual, a dominant theme of the 1960s and early 1970s, and one which continues to trouble our society, our institutions, and our profession to this day.

Student development education appears to value development exclusively as an end in itself rather than as a means to the achievement of desired ends greater than the individual and critical to the maintenance and improvement of the larger society.

We believe that student development has only minimally satisfied the intent of the values component.

A Profession's Role and Functions

A profession's role and functions, the third component, involves the identification and explanation of what it has done (history), what it is doing (present practice), and what it seeks to do (goals). It clarifies such issues as the scope of specialized roles, skills, competencies, knowledge, and performance standards that identify both the profession and its professionals. The component encompasses statements of practice that are congruent with what the profession believes and values.

As in the case of the first two components, once again the student development philosophy does not measure up very well. It contains no mention of the profession's history; therefore it cannot draw upon the rich values, traditions, and successes of its past. It provides for processes to be facilitated and outlines skills to be possessed, but it does not provide for functions to be performed and services to be provided. Student development fares better with regard to specific goals attempting to be nonprescriptive and comprehensive while providing agendas for professional preparation.

With regard to role and function, student development has somewhat satisfied the requirements of the third component.

A Profession's Identity

The fourth component, a profession's identity, entails the culmination of a solid philosophy. It is the integration and well-developed congruence among what a profession believes, what it values, and what it does, that should result in clarity and integrity regarding what it is.

Student development's major weakness regarding its identity, especially within the context of collegiate institutions, may be found, for example in its view of its practitioners as student development specialists, suggesting a kind of clinical-psychological model of professional preparation as well as relationship with students. It advocates graduate preparation and skills development in the behavioral sciences but disregards the contribution of education, pedagogy, and learning theory. This omission presents an interesting irony in that while student development prizes educative roles and functions under the banner of development, consultation, collaboration, counseling, and administration, it slights many of those learnings that are considered critical to successful educational practice. For example, knowledge of how students learn and the approaches, techniques, and procedures (pedagogy) which most effectively bring about the desired learning are not mentioned.

Subtle, but important is the underlying implication is that the student development practitioner's role is an attempt to

establish status for the cocurriculum and that the practitioner's instructional role is co-equal with that of the formal classroom and the instructional faculty. This implied goal runs contrary to the SPPV's contention that the appropriate role of student affairs is to support the academic mission of the college and is contrary as well to the perception and expectation of the faculty. Indeed, this dichotomy may well have set up the presenting contingencies which led the NASPA document, *A Perspective on Student Affairs* (1987), to state that one of the core assumptions or beliefs of the field of student affairs is as follows:

> *"The academic mission of the institution is preeminent... the work of student affairs should not compete with and cannot substitute for that academic experience. As a partner in the educational enterprise, student affairs enhances and supports the academic mission" (p.9-10)*

On the fourth and final component of a professional philosophy, the profession's sense of identity, student development again somewhat satisfies the conditions inherent in the component.

Student Development is Not a Philosophy

In a number of publications over the past two decades, various authorities have implied or contended at student development is a philosophy (COSPA, 1975; Miller & Prince, 1976; Rodgers, 1990). However, the rationales and arguments presented in order to justify this assertion or advocacy have been weak and, at best, have strained credulity. This is especially so because these arguments were not first subjected to logical analysis and examination against acceptable criteria.

We contend that the Student Personnel Point of View appears to better fulfill the four components of a philosophy: Basic Principles, Values, Role and Function, and Identity—especially in the manner in which the SPPV values and places into context the basic purposes of higher education and

students, and the responsibilities that both owe to the larger society. This last point is critical since it deals with the very controversial problem of the dual relationship between the individual and society, an issue that is hundreds of years old, and the conflict between the rights-based philosophy of Locke and the majoritarian beliefs of Rousseau. In this respect, the writers of the SPPV manifested sensibility and responsibility in discussing the need for a balance between individuals and the society within which they must pursue their goals, while the authors of SDSPSE failed to address it.

When measured against the four basic components necessary for building a professional philosophy, the concept of student development cannot be supported as a professional philosophy. In fact, in relation to the four components, the Student Personnel Point of View, seemingly dated as it may be, is a much stronger statement of the field's basic philosophy and is in no way supplanted by the student development concept, at least as articulated in the SDSPSE.

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Chapter III

An Analysis of Student Development Theory

The field of student affairs has generally been accepted as a diverse, loosely coupled conglomerate of services and programs addressing the out-of-class needs of students. This diversity is characteristic not only of the administrative structures and daily functions of student affairs, but also of the professional preparation of the field's practitioners and the theories many use to guide their practice. In short, the field of student affairs is not known for its precise and discreet functions, terms or guiding principles, nor for its adherence to the presumably clear theory base of student development.

Although student development theory has been acclaimed in recent years as the guiding theoretical framework of the student affairs profession, in reality there is no student development theory per se. What the field currently calls student development theory is a hodgepodge of theoretical perspectives (a number of them borrowed from other disciplines) that address such areas as the psychosocial (Chickering, 1969), the cognitive (Perry, 1970, 1981), and the maturational development of adult students (Gould, 1972; Vaillant, 1972), or provide topologies of certain traits or characteristics (Myers, 1980). Thus, the field does not have a single student development theory; rather, it has multiple student development theories. Further, as addressed in earlier chapters, the adoption of this theoretical perspective occurred without a critical analysis of the concept of student development as a gestalt or of the individual theories currently viewed as central to understanding college students.

Apart from the concerns previously raised in earlier chapters, what of the theories themselves? Are they good theories

for their purpose? What is a good theory? To explore these questions, this chapter provides an analysis of student development theories in relation to six elements of effective theory identified in the professional literature: logical coherence, generalizability, testability, significance, contribution to understanding, and simplicity. To accomplish this purpose, the following areas are addressed: (a) what is meant by the term *theory*; (b) what makes good theory; and (c), given a view of good theory, what is the state of current student development theory/theories?

What Is Meant By The Term "Theory"?

Fundamentally, it is the function of theory to account for what is known (facts) while pointing the way to what is unknown (giving direction to research). Hence, the fruitfulness of a theory lies in the unknown and the relations it envisions regarding what can be studied and observed under researchable conditions. As Blocher (1987) states in his article, "On the Uses and Misuses of the Term Theory," a theory is "a way of organizing what is known about some phenomenon to generate a set of interrelated, plausible, and above all, refutable propositions about what is unknown" (p. 67). A theory or theories of student development should provide a way of organizing what is known about students in the college environment into a set of inter-related, plausible, and potentially testable propositions that will serve both to guide practice and direct research to further the field's knowledge base. Thus, such theories not only should enable us to clarify what is known about college students, but also to hypothesize, to test, and even to predict what is unknown.

What Makes A "Good" Theory?

If we accept the definition of theory given above, we must then move beyond vernacular, but all-too-common, uses of the term "theory" which imply vague conceptualizations, simple descriptions of events, prescriptions about desirable social behaviors, untested hypotheses or ideas, or "any more or less

loosely strung together set of ideas or generalization..." (Blocher, 1987, p. 67). The aim here is not to identify a right theory versus a wrong theory, but rather to emphasize that the process of theory development is more about seeking accurate descriptions of phenomena that lend themselves to plausible explanations of the unknown than of seeking truth per se.

In this regard, a cross-sectional review of the literature of theory assessment seems to suggest six elements or common denominators of good or better theory (Gergen, 1969; Hardy, 1973, 1978; Schrag, 1976). These elements, which include logical coherence, generalizability, testability, significance, contribution to understanding, and simplicity, can serve as templates for assessing the adequacy of individual theories—the assumption being that the better theories possess more of each element.

What is the Status of Current Student Development Theory?

To assess the status of current student development theories, one could proceed by selecting a specific theory and measuring it against the six templates of good theory to assess its correspondence. However, given the multiplicity of student development theories, such a procedure is well beyond the scope of this chapter. Thus, in the interest of time and with respect for the substance of each of the theories, we will instead suggest some general difficulties that emerge when student development theories taken as a gestalt are measured against each of the six templates.

Logical Coherence

When a theory is logically coherent, its basic assumptions and concepts as well as their interrelationships are both delineated and integrated into a logical whole. Further, its terms are used and defined in a manner that is consonant with accepted usage in the field and its underlying assumptions are valid.

Several concerns are evident with regard to the logical coherence of student development theories. First, while a case

can be made that for the most part the individual theories of student development are logically coherent, coherence is left to suffer when they are somewhat esoterically assembled into eclectic groupings. Second, due to the age of many of the theories, theoretical definitions of specific concepts may need to be reexamined to determine if these definitions are still relevant to today's college students. For example, the meanings of terms such as integrity (Chickering, 1969) and maturing (Heath, 1964) may have changed in general, societal meaning since their original formulation. In addition, the population of American college students has changed greatly in terms of ethnicity, age, and gender in recent years which may render older theoretical formulations obsolete. The result is an ambiguity or uncertainty about the meaning of a number of the theoretical concepts of student development as well as their applicability to current situations.

A third concern regarding the logical coherence of student development theories has to do with the relationship among concepts. For example, cognitive theories of development focus specifically on cognitive skills, but generally fail to delineate how such skills relate to an individual's affective expression. In addition, most theories do not adequately express the dynamic and mutually-influencing relationship between the person and the environment (Benjamin, 1986). Because the concept of person-environment interaction is missing from many student development theories, the field of college student affairs has found it necessary to adopt separate theories of person-environment interaction to explain this aspect. Yet a fourth limitation of student development theories with regard to logical coherence is the failure of theorists and practitioners to adapt or alter the theories in light of refuting evidence. For example, many of the older theories assume that development is relatively continuous (affected by past states of the individual) and that disruption at an earlier stage affects development in later stages; however, this assumption has not been verified in more recent studies (Benjamin, 1980, 1986; Finkelhor, 1984).

Generalizability (Abstractness)

A theory that is generalizable is applicable to different populations and settings. The more generic the theory, the more widely useful it may be.

Because of the changed and changing nature of today's college student population, the generalizability of student development theories may be severely compromised. Many of the theories still in use were developed in the 1960s and 1970s and have not been updated in recent years. The works of Vaillant (1977), Gould (1972), and Chickering (1969), for example, need to be revalidated to ascertain their relevance to current student populations. (Chickering is currently working on a new edition of *Education and Identity* that may provide a needed update to his theory.) In addition, samples used as a basis for developing some of the theories were small, socioeconomically homogeneous, and included primarily Caucasian males between the ages of 18 and 22 who, at the time of the original studies, comprised the majority of the U.S. college population (Chickering, 1969; Kohlberg, 1981; Perry, 1970).

Today, however, students are increasingly diverse in terms of age, gender, and ethnicity. To the extent that such students have different life histories than the students in the original samples, the generalizability of the resulting theories may be compromised and must be reassessed. Peer support and direction, for example, seem to play a far greater role (and faculty, a far lesser role) in influencing behavior and/or development than was believed to be the case when many of the theories were originally developed. Further, the large numbers of older students, commuter students, and students who drop-in and drop-out of college have changed the nature of the intellectual and social experience characteristic of today's colleges and universities. Because many student development theories are based on a different population (different time, different ethnic mix, different role of cohort group, etc.), than is commonly enrolled in college today, these theories need to be reexamined for current relevancy.

The issue of the generalizability of student development theories also raises an interesting question in light of the current call to celebrate diversity. In fact, to the extent that college student affairs as a field champions the individual, its practitioners seem also to disdain the notion of generalized treatment. On one hand, student affairs professionals seek theories that are sufficiently generalizable that they can be applied to different populations and/or settings. On the other hand, however, these same student affairs professionals seem to resist the assumption that people, places, or things are the same and hence, tend to avoid any position that fails to celebrate individual differences.

Where then does the increasing diversity of the college student population leave us with regard to the use of student development theories? Does valuing diversity and individual differences implicitly and/or explicitly devalue generalizability in any form? Have we now evolved to a position wherein our taken-for-granted theoretical orientation necessitates a separate theory for each identifiable sub-population? Indeed, if this is the case, how small a subset of students and what qualifications of uniqueness justify a separate theory for the subset and invalidate the application of a more generalized theory? These questions regarding generalizability are not easily answered. Nevertheless, the increasing diversity on our campuses necessitates that current student development theories be reevaluated to ascertain whether they are, or even should be, sufficiently generalizable today.

Testability (Empirical/Operational Adequacy)

A testable theory is one that has concepts that can be operationally defined and subsequently tested. It is also one in which the operational definitions reflect the theoretical concepts. According to Popper (1959), a theory must be able to be falsified (*i.e.*, capable of being proven to be incorrect) in order to be considered valid. Thus, in examining a theory's empirical adequacy, one must look at how much evidence there is to support the theory's claims. In addition, the empirical

adequacy of a theory is dependent upon its logical coherence (see above) or adequacy. In other words, if the concepts of the theory are not logically coherent, then the theory cannot be considered as empirically adequate even if the theory can be tested and falsified.

To be applicable both to practice and to provide a basis for research, a theory must be testable. In other words, we must be able to operationalize its theoretical concepts so that they can be refined and used in ongoing research. Refinement and testing are not possible with some student development theories insofar as they are based on tautologies (*i.e.*, they are non-refutable or non-falsifiable). Erikson's (1963) theory, for example, is based on the tautology of psychoanalytic theory. His eight stages have not been operationalized so that they can be tested and subsequently supported or refuted. Furthermore, even when elements of some student development theories are testable, it may be difficult to operationalize some of their concepts. Chickering's (1969), "freeing interpersonal relationships," presents just such a case insofar as this concept is difficult to operationalize for the purposes of measurement.

Another problem in terms of the testability of student development theories is the changing definition of concepts discussed above in the section on logical coherence. Thus, in testing theories with today's students, definitions derived from student development theories must be reexamined for current relevance and, where necessary, updated or changed. The updating of theoretical definitions also may necessitate reexamining conceptual relationships to assure that theories are current and therefore applicable to today's students.

Significance (Predictability and Usefulness)

A theory is significant or useful to the extent that it can be used to control or predict desired outcomes. The theory that will bring about the strongest, most favorable outcome is the one that is preferred. According to Hardy (1973), the predictability and usefulness of a theory increase with the level of the theory. Theory levels may range from Level 1, defined as a

theory that provides a topology, to Level 5, a theory that enables the control of phenomena.

The predictability and usefulness of student development theories for application with today's college students is another area that must be called into question, especially in light of a number of the issues raised above in relation to generalizability. The life histories of the college students of the 1990s are different from those of the 1960s and 1970s. Current students constitute an increasingly diverse population in terms of age, ethnic background, and higher education experience with many commuting, attending part-time, postponing graduation, etc. Further, insofar as choices and their consequences play so critical a role in the developmental process across all theories, it stands to reason that theories need to be reexamined in light of current contingencies that have minimized or significantly altered the reality of the expected consequences in today's world. As a result, interventions based on a particular student development theory may no longer be adequate to effectuate the desired change or outcome in a given student group.

For example, Kohlberg's (1963) theory of moral development holds that moral progress occurs as a result of exposure to moral reasoning at a higher level than that which the individual currently possesses. The gulf between the actual and observed state creates in the individual a sense of dissonance and results in movement to yet a higher level. Interventions are thus developed that expose students to higher levels of moral reasoning in order to create cognitive dissonance. Today's students, however, appear to live daily with a sense of cognitive dissonance. Thus, attempting to create this state artificially may have less than the desired effect.

Related is a concern that practitioners, when developing theory-based interventions, may make an assumption that the stated developmental goals and tasks of a given theory are currently viable and applicable to the broad, general population of college students. Such an assumption may be illusory at best. In addition, insofar as many if not most student

development theories tend to address themselves more to processes than to outcomes, they are difficult to use for either predicting outcomes or manipulating phenomena to achieve particular ends.

Contribution to Understanding (Heuristic Value)

A theory with heuristic value is one that increases understanding of phenomena by describing them and offering a basis for insight—one that addresses or solves a broad range of problems. Theories with heuristic value also stimulate other work in the field.

In terms of the heuristic value of student development theories, it can be argued that such theories have increased our understanding of individuals in the college environment and also have stimulated additional research in the area of student development. Nonetheless, the question remains whether these theories provide an adequate understanding of today's students and the students of the future. In order to use current student development theories, one must assume that the stated developmental goals of a particular theory are valid as well as generalizable to the population of students on today's campuses. Given the populations from which the theories were developed and the increasing ethnic, gender, and age diversity of today's students, the continued heuristic value of student development theories cannot be assumed.

Simplicity (Parsimony)

A simple or parsimonious theory is one that is terse and pithy. In other words, it is one that uses the briefest and simplest concepts to get its point across.

The simplicity of student development theories is another area of concern. On one hand, it may be argued that individual theories such as those developed by Kohlberg (1981), Chickering (1969), and Perry (1970) are parsimonious. On the other hand, student development as a metaparadigm is confusing in the multiplicity of concepts and individual perspec-

tives it encompasses. There is also the continuing question of whether specific theories apply to diverse student populations and, if they fail to do so, whether additional or more specific formulations are then needed. However, the development of group specific theories raises the concern that a given theory may apply to such a small subset of students that its very simplicity sacrifices its usefulness.

Conclusion

From the above, albeit brief, evaluation of student development theory in relation to the elements of logical coherence, generalizability, testability, significance, contribution to understanding, and simplicity that constitute an effective theory, it is evident that student development as theory is inadequate in many areas. In particular, student development is found wanting in terms of testability and generalizability. This is not to propose that student development theory has failed to be of help to student affairs practitioners, but rather that a more critical examination of the theories is needed to ascertain their logical coherence, generalizability, testability, etc. A recurring theme in several of the analyses above is that many of the theories were developed 15 or more years ago and have not been updated since that time. Their relevance to today's diverse population of college students cannot be assumed and deserves serious and continuing attention in the future.

Furthermore, in addition to the six areas of concern raised above regarding student development theories viewed as a gestalt, an even more serious concern can be raised regarding student development theory itself—*i.e.*, that the theories are not theories at all, but rather are an eclectic melange of concepts without theory. If such is the case, to use the term theory would be a misnomer, and to advance these disparate concepts as a theory or as a theoretical framework would be both inaccurate and inappropriate.

So how is the profession of college student affairs to proceed with this eclectic medley of theoretical perspectives?

The most important step seems to be the need to give up the whole-hearted and uncritical espousal of student development theory and to begin the process of critically examining the field's theoretical foundations by evaluating individual theories and by exploring the need for a larger paradigm to guide professional practice. With regard to the examination of individual theories, it is suggested that student development professionals assess the status of specific theories in terms of the six templates as described above. This is accomplished, first, by reviewing each individual theory (a process well beyond the scope of this chapter) and, second, by reviewing the individual theories taken as a gestalt (a process begun at least briefly above). Thereafter, there is a need for the field to scrutinize the concepts it eclectically employs as theory toward the ultimate end of developing a meta-theory for the field of student affairs that would encompass most or all of the concepts germane to the development of students. Without such critical and ongoing attention to theory development, testing, and refinement in student affairs, the field will remain mired in the use of theoretical concepts without an empirical basis—a practice destined to continue to hinder its professionals from accurately assessing the outcomes of their interventions or the efficacy of their services.

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Chapter IV

An Assessment of Student Development Research

The student development movement has had a profound effect upon the conduct and practice, if not the rhetoric, of student affairs programming and administration since the 1970s. What effect has the movement had upon student affairs research? To what extent has research engendered by the movement and its conceptualization of student development been successful in confirming the principal tenets of the concept? In an attempt to come to some sort of judgment concerning its magnitude, effectiveness, and deficiencies, this chapter focuses upon the research that has supported the student development model.

Specifically, this chapter deals with three major areas concerning the extant research on student development:

1. Do student development interventions work? That is, does a particular theory-based student development intervention or treatment (independent variable) result in the theorized effect or outcome (dependent variable)?
2. How much of the current student affairs research is devoted to empirical research on student development? What types of research designs and approaches are employed? And,
3. What conclusions about the quality and nature of the research on student development may be drawn from the research record and to what observations and recommendations do they lead?

Research on other issues in the professional field of student affairs will not be addressed nor will we examine the broader questions involving the acknowledged developmental impact of the college experience itself. We have, instead, confined our inquiry to an evaluation of the research stemming from the principal doctrine of the student development movement: that student affairs staff, utilizing theory-based models, should design programmatic interventions that will effectuate developmental change. What does the evidence tell us?

Do Student Development Interventions Work?

This, of course, is the central question that should be addressed by the research on student development. After over twenty years of teaching and practice, what does research say about the efficacy of theory-based intentional interventions, the core of the student development movement? The earliest examination of this question of which we are aware may be found in Thrasher and Bloland (1989) who surveyed the published research literature for studies on the implementation and evaluation of theory-based student development intervention programs between 1973—about the time student development as a concept began appearing in the literature—through 1987. The studies reviewed met the following criteria: (a) they were grounded in student development theory, (b) they studied a college-level population, and (c) they were evaluated. The search yielded about 145 documents that appeared to meet the criteria; most, however, did not qualify upon inspection.

Interventions were classified as either "intentional" or "incidental". Studies dealing with intentional interventions involved programs that had been specifically designed to bring about a change in some student development variable. These studies were most often experimental or quasi-experimental.

The second type of intervention was classified as incidental if it was an accepted on-going dimension of the college experience, *i.e.*, the effect of residence hall living, participation in student activities, or just plain college attendance. In

other words, the existing collegiate environment was the treatment. Any developmental gains were seen as incidental to the experience itself. These studies were most likely to be ex post facto or correlational investigations.

Intentional Interventions

Of the 12 studies categorized under the "intentional" rubric, Thrasher and Bloland were able to identify 4 developmentally designed program interventions of which 2 yielded statistically significant results. There were 6 developmentally designed academic courses of which 4 presented significant positive results, 1 reported mixed results, and 1 was non-significant. There were 2 comprehensive student programs, both of which showed significant results, 1 positive and 1 negative.

Although 8 of the 12 studies yielded what might be termed significant and positive results, there were some serious flaws in most of them. For example, if there were significant differences, they were usually obtained for only a portion of the variables studied; one study relied on positive student comments; the reliability and validity of some of the instruments were questionable or not reported; several studies did not employ control groups leaving a question concerning whether the intervention was, in fact, the major factor in the significant differences observed; most designs were not tightly drawn and extraneous variables were present; and the external validity or generalizability of several studies was seriously compromised.

Incidental Interventions

Of the incidental interventions, Thrasher and Bloland (1989) found 15 studies that met their criteria. The 4 studies on residence hall living had positive results, 3 statistically significant. Two investigations on student activities were noted, 1 positive and significant and 1 with inconclusive results. There were 4 studies that examined the total college experience itself as the developmental intervention; 3 yielded positive results, 2 of the 3 were significant while the 4th yielded

variable results. There were another 5 studies whose interventions did not fit the other classifications. One of these was not significant while 4 were significant, 3 positive and 1 negative.

Most of the investigations of incidental interventions suffered from some of the same flaws as did the intentional interventions. In addition there were problems with the differential selection of subjects—perhaps the students comprising the comparison groups, *i.e.*, residence halls students vs. commuter students—were already different prior to the incidental intervention; the external validity of many studies was questionable; and self-reported data were often used without acknowledging the fact.

Thrasher and Bloland concluded on the basis of their extensive review, utilizing somewhat restrictive but, nevertheless, rigorous criteria, 1) that the amount of formal research on student development over a 14-year period was disappointing; 2) that these studies generally lacked control or comparison groups, thereby lending themselves to a number of rival hypotheses; and 3) that, however, the preponderance of what little evidence they were able to uncover appeared to endorse the probability of a student development effect.

Several years after the Thrasher and Bloland (1989) review, Pascarella and Terenzini (1991) published their massive review of twenty years of research on the impact of the college experience on undergraduate students. While the bulk of their review focused on the broader questions of college effects, *e.g.*, student change during college, additional change resulting from college attendance (value-added), effect of different kinds of colleges, long-term effects, etc., Pascarella and Terenzini also reviewed the evidence on the effect that different experiences or environments within a single institution might have had upon the development of students. It is with these "within-college effects," as Pascarella and Terenzini termed them, that the student development movement has been most concerned, particularly those non-curricular experiences that can be programmed by student affairs staff to produce theory-based changes, the so-called "intentional interventions" of Thrasher and Bloland (1989).

However, Pascarella and Terenzini did not attempt to specify intentional interventions in their summary,"...because these interventions take such diverse, often idiosyncratic form,... are often of very brief duration, frequently employ opportunity samples of questionable representativeness for any larger population and use widely varied designs and analytical procedures..." (p. 211). They went on to state that, "Overall, our review leads us to agree with Thrasher and Bloland who... concluded that while program effects were found, they tended to be small, perhaps because such studies examined change over a short period of time" (p. 211).

Research Production in Student Development

The research studies reviewed by Thrasher and Bloland in their 1989 article were selected because they purported to evaluate change that may have resulted from theory-based intervention programs. In this section, we have cast a wider net, looking at the overall production of empirical research on student development, *i.e.*, how much empirical research has there been and what kinds of research designs have been employed? Our overview consisted of a content analysis of four years (1987-90) of the *Journal of College Student Development* (formerly the *Journal of College Student Personnel*), the *National Association of Student Personnel Administrators Journal (NASPA Journal)* and the *Journal of the National Association for Women Deans, Administrators, and Counselors (NAWDAC Journal*) now called *Initiatives*. This analysis of some 598 articles was then compared with a similar four-year span, 1977-1980, a period shortly after the beginnings of the student development movement but sufficiently removed so that the literature could be expected to have matured somewhat. This earlier period added another 498 articles for a total of 1184 articles examined.

We were searching for articles in the three journals that met the following broad criteria:

1. The articles had to be research reports, that is, the study attempted to investigate, mostly by empirical means, some facet of student development. We were not interested in

research on any other aspect of student affairs—just student development research. Using these criteria, 76 essays on student development were eliminated from the analysis.

2. The reports described themselves in the title or the abstract as somehow student development related; that is, they tested student development theory, dealt with research methodology relevant to student development, examined student development assessment instruments, or reviewed related literature. If student development was not mentioned in the title or abstract the article was eliminated even though it may have been developmentally oriented.

Journal Research Content

A comparison of the proportion of research studies to other articles published in the three student affairs journals ought to provide an approximation of the relative importance each journal places on investigations into the efficacy of student development programming. The number of studies devoted to research on student development in these three journals doubled between 1977-80 and 1987-90. Most of the increase was represented by the *Journal of College Student Development* which almost tripled its student development research content, from 12 to 33, although the ratio of these studies to its total content still was not impressive, from 3.5% in the earlier period to 13% in the later period. The *NASPA Journal* dropped its student development research content from 4% to 2% while the *NAWDAC Journal* published only two research articles on student development, both of them in the 1977-80 period.

Research Designs Employed

An examination of the types of research designs utilized in student development studies provides a rough index of the sophistication of the research being published. The most powerful approach for determining the effect of one factor, or

factors, upon another would be the true experimental design, characterized by the random assignment of subjects to treatment and control groups so that the two groups have no major differences between them before an intervention begins. The true experimental and the quasi-experimental designs (no random assignment, intact groups) permit the researcher to make more definitive statements on cause and effect, a prime consideration in assessing the effect of a student development intervention.

However, only four studies in all three journals in the two four-year periods surveyed could readily be categorized as either *quasi or true experimental designs*. In fairness it should be noted that it is very difficult to achieve random assignment in field studies although quasi-experimental studies which can use pre-formed, intact groups ought to be feasible.

Of the *non-experimental designs*, those describing phenomena involving relationships between variables without suggesting cause and effect, five descriptive studies, seven correlational studies, and eight survey investigations were located.

Ex post facto, or causal-comparative, designs were defined as those that studied cause and effect by comparing groups of students on variables that could not be manipulated experimentally because the causal events had already occurred. For example, an ex post facto study might ask "Are there significant developmental differences between inner-city students and those who came to college from a rural background?" There were 12 such studies, 8 of which were theory-based. It is notable that 11 of the 12 were conducted in the 1987-90 time frame; only 1 in the earlier period was identified. The ex post facto design appeared to be the most popular design and lends itself well to the study of student development effects because it does not require experimental manipulation while yet accommodating itself to robust statistical treatment.

A fourth major design category lumps all *qualitative* methodologies together. In spite of an increasing interest in the student affairs field in promoting more qualitative designs (Brown, 1983, 1988; Caple, 1991) only seven such studies were

identified, five of them in the recent 4-year period, and two in the earlier, 1977-1980, period.

Longitudinal studies also have been endorsed by researchers in order to measure the long-term effect of student development interventions. There were eight studeis that could be reasonably be classified as longitudinal, six of them conducted and reported in a later time frame, 1987-1990. Several of the longitudinal studies could just as well have been categorized as correlational, ex post facto, or quasi-experimental. There were eight studies that could reasonably be classified as longitudinal, six of them conducted and reported in the later time frame, 1987-90.

There were other published articles that did not fit the generally recognized research design divisions but which reported on studies that contributed to the on-going research needs of those studying student development. For example, there were three articles dealing with research methodologies that were considered as useful to student development investigations. Five articles discussed the development of research instruments concerned with the measurement of developmental variables, and there were two reviews of the research literature.

In order to bring the content analysis up-to-date, we then examined the research literature on student development for 1991 and 1992 in the same three student affairs journals. Using identical criteria, we found two additional correlational studies, two surveys, four ex post facto studies, and six primarily qualitative studies, four of them published in a single issue of the *Journal of College Student Development* devoted to qualitative research (Caple, 1991). There was one more longitudinal investigation and one more article on instrument development. Out of a total of 128 articles in the three journals, only 16 or about 12.5% were devoted to empirical research on some facet of college student development. Thirteen of the 16 were published in the *Journal of College Student Development*.

It is clear that little research specifically addressing student development is being published in the three principal journals representing the student affairs field. The *Journal of*

College Student Development is the primary repository of student development research, a focus might be expected in view of its title, but still only about one out of ten published articles in that journal deals with student development research. In spite of the emphasis upon student development in the general literature of the student affairs profession, in the annual conventions, and in the workshops, little research is being done to validate the broad construct that is a central feature of its commitment to students.

Some Observations and Recommendations

After completing these two analyses of the research literature on student development, we were left with a number of impressions. What follows is a series of eleven observations that either imply certain recommendations or make them explicit.

1. As noted earlier, a surprising number of studies reporting significant results did not employ control or comparison groups. As a consequence, any observed effect could lend itself to rival hypotheses—that is to say, it may not have been the student development intervention being studied that caused the significant result.
2. Because of the difficulties inherent in implementing true experimental conditions when one is doing research with students in their environment, it is understandable that so few of these are done. Yet, if one designed a specific and circumscribed intervention on an easily measured variable, as in a developmental course, it ought to be possible to employ random assignment and control groups. The same is true of quasi-experimental studies, or longitudinal field studies.
3. A major problem is insufficient time in treatment. Can one reasonably expect that a developmental variable would be affected by a treatment of, say, one hour a week for six weeks, for example? The pressure for results, a dissertation or publication, means that the "quick and dirty" approach is almost endemic in the field. One

cannot fault the researchers but the result is less than potent treatments. Consider also that only the most statistically significant studies are published in the journals. How many unpublished dissertations found no student development effect worth reporting?

4. Because practically no experimental research is being done, the results are subject to selection bias, *i.e.*, the posttesting differences may have been inherent in the sample selected and not due to the treatment. As pointed out earlier by Pascarella and Terenzini (1991), too many student development studies "frequently employ opportunity samples of questionable representativeness for any larger population" (p. 211). If the results of these studies, although they may be statistically significant, lack external validity, *i.e.*, apply only to the limited and idiosyncratic samples studied, we have learned very little of practical worth to student affairs. Such studies appear to be exercises in research methodology rather than contributions to the field.
5. Certainly, differential treatment of experimental and quasi-experimental samples has been a problem in several studies—groups in different institutions or using different leaders or instructors for comparison groups. Any significant developmental change may well be due to inherent differences in the institutions or leaders, not the treatment.
6. There is little replication of studies, probably because the published studies do not provide enough information about the nature of the treatment for others to duplicate them. How do we know that the observed effect is not simply idiosyncratic to that situation unless we can see the same effect in different settings and with different populations?
7. Methods of data analysis have become much more sophisticated today than they were ten years ago. We have such methodologies as discriminant analysis, LISREL,

canonical correlation, path analysis, causal modeling, factor analysis, MANOVA designs, and the like being utilized. The availability of increasingly powerful and complex computer hardware and software makes it possible to process and analyze huge amounts of complicated data and multiple variables. Unfortunately, the findings then made available to the field do not appear to have contributed proportionately to our understanding of student development theory and its application to everyday programming and administration.

8. Researchers today are using a wider variety of student development theories and models than was true ten years ago, probably because more are available. However, relatively little work is being done to generate developmental theories that address the increasing diversity of today's typical college campus. Without an appropriate theory base, meaningful research on these diverse populations is stymied.
9. Very few qualitative investigations on student development are published in the journals—despite the open invitation from Brown in his first editorial as Editor of the Journal of College Student Personnel (1983) in which he said that "solid experimental research must be balanced with good qualitative studies" (p. 3). He later stated that the so-called emerging paradigm may best be investigated through qualitative approaches that "often let the theory emerge from the data rather than be preordained before conducting...studies" (Brown, 1988, p. 99).

Other authorities have joined in the call for the deployment of a wider range of research methodologies in the field of student affairs. Kuh, Whitt, and Shedd, in their provocative 1987 monograph, *Student Affairs Work, 2001: A Paradigmatic Odyssey*, expressed their belief that naturalistic inquiry will not only become more accepted as a legitimate mode of research but is "absolutely necessary to describe and make meaning of the complex and mutual shaping interactions that occur within the

campus milieu" (p. 91). Kuh (1991) later repeated the call for naturalistic inquiry and predicted that "more naturalistic studies will begin to appear in the student affairs journals as student affairs researchers become more familiar and gain experience with these methods" (p. 74).

As if to underline Kuh's prediction, the September, 1992 issue of the *Journal of College Student Development* was devoted to qualitative research methods in student affairs, featuring assumptions, methodology, and examples of qualitative research (Caple, 1991). And,finally, Pascarella and Terenzini (1991) predicted that naturalistic studies will make significant contributions to our understanding of the effect of college: "When employed judiciously, such approaches are capable of providing greater sensitivity to many of the subtle and fine-grained complexities of college impact than more traditional quantitative approaches" (p. 634).

10. There has been some discussion of meta-analysis or integrative research reviews (Manke & Erwin, 1988, pp. 549-552) in which the results of a number of related studies on a single topic can be pooled. Unfortunately, in the area of student development, there have not been enough studies on a single topic to integrate for a meta-analysis —thus the need for replications. In fact, there are very few reviews of the research literature at all. Only two were identified in the 8-year period sampled and described earlier. It is imperative that, as the body of research on student development expands, researchers begin to synthesize it, whether through traditional literature reviews or meta-analysis.
11. And, finally, there is the variable problem. Not only are better and more sensitive instruments needed but the current anarchy in our studies of student development should be reduced. Each lonely graduate student or isolated professor picks out his or her favorite variable and runs a study which then reigns as the only study ever

conducted or likely to be conducted on that variable—hardly the way to create a unified coherent field.

Pascarella and Terenzini (1991), in their monumental synthesis of the research on college student growth and change, have suggested a reason why so much of the type of research reviewed in this chapter has been unproductive:

> *Most theoretical models of development in no way guarantee that any single experience will be an important determinant of change for all students. A majority of important changes that occur during college are probably the cumulative result of a set of interrelated experiences sustained over an extended period of time. Consequently, research that focuses on the impact of single or isolated experience, a characteristic of most investigations of within-college influences, is unlikely to yield strong effects. (p.610)*

Without restricting in any way the creativity of independent researchers as they follow their intuitions, a coordinated research program might collectively specify a set of variables that are important to generalized student development, devise a set of standardized instruments to measure them, and then concentrate a number of studies on these variables across many institutions. It would then be possible for a body of unified research findings to emerge from the collective data and we could begin to see if student development intervention and programming really results in enhanced student growth and development.

Summary

In summary, we will readily admit that our criticisms of the extant research on student development might well be made of the research in many other applied fields, particularly in the human sciences. Great credit is due the researchers who undertake to thread their way through the mine fields of formal inquiry in an effort to shed light on a research problem of concern to the field and its advancement.

But, at the same time, good intentions are not enough in the grim marketplace of ideas. Unless student development researchers can begin to design and implement some well-conceived studies that yield positive data with the fewest threats to internal and external validity and on variables that are important—that matter—the student development concept is going nowhere. And politically, on the campus, even good research on student development may be irrelevant if the model is not accepted as a worthwhile investment for an institution.

For a field so devoted to student development that it has changed the name of its journal to demonstrate that devotion, there is precious little research evidence to justify that wholesale affection, and that which is available is not very reassuring considering the need—all of which leaves the student affairs profession with the question, "Is there such a thing as intentional student development?" We would answer by saying, "We really don't know. There is some tentative evidence that developmental change may be demonstrated for some narrowly-focused developmental variables under certain conditions with specific populations—at least once!"

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CHAPTER V

An Appraisal of Student Development Literature

The literature of student development constitutes a sub set of the extensive literature of college student personnel work/student affairs and is of relatively recent origin. Little was written about student development, either theory or practice, as it is thought of today, until the early 1970s. In this chapter we present a critical analysis of the literature by first describing the population ostensibly being served. Then, after a critique of professional journals, book literature, monographs, and the Jossey-Bass New Directions paperback series, we will examine what we consider to be reasonable standards that professional writing ought to meet. Finally, we consider some of the needs of the student affairs field that are currently being neglected by its literature. It is important to keep in mind that, ideally, the professional literature is intended to describe as well as to have a positive effect upon the nature of practice and the manner in which practice aids society, institutions, and students in achieving their educational and citizenship goals.

Who is Being Served by the Literature of Student Affairs?

There are about 50,000 student affairs staff members in the United States serving approximately 3,500 colleges and universities and their 13.5 million students. Over 40% of college students are adult learners and 85% are commuters or

live off-campus (Tauber, 1991), leaving only 15% who can still be classified as the traditional 18-22 year-old full-time student cohort to which most student development theory, research, and literature is directed.

To our knowledge, no study has been conducted or published that has surveyed the academic and experiential characteristics of the 50,000 or so student affairs staff who are the intended consumers of student development theory and literature. However, a reasonable characterization would describe them as almost evenly divided between holders of a baccalaureate degree and those with advanced degrees, with only about 20% (10,000) of the latter group having had direct or related academic preparation for a career in student affairs (R. H. Shaffer, personal communication, March 21 & May 6, 1987).

Approximately 26-27% of middle-management staff in higher education leave the field each year (Blum, 1989), and of the 1,000 master's degree-level students who graduate in student affairs each year, approximately 32-39% leave the field between their fifth and seventh years (Burns, 1982; Evans, 1988). Thus, it is apparent that the number of professionally prepared practitioners leaving the field far exceeds the number of trained people entering it. This net loss gives some credence to the field's perception of itself as a collection of paraprofessionals, with few active staff members possessing backgrounds of substance and sophistication in psychology, sociology, anthropology, or education.

An understanding of the nature and content of studen development theory and literature and of its successful application is contingent upon a relatively high level of knowledge, skill, and competency of practitioners acting as applied behavioral scientists and educators. However, given the demographic characteristics of the typical paraprofessional practitioner, it is evident that the intended audience for the published literature of student affairs constitutes a minority. It is from the perspective of practitioners, mostly paraprofessionals, and their needs that we have evaluated the non-research literature of student development.

The Literature of the Profession

The literature affecting the growing profession of student affairs can be grouped into three basic categories:

1. Refereed and non-refereed journal articles,
2. Textbooks and text/practitioner books, and
3. Monographs and Jossey-Bass New Directions Series paperbacks.

Refereed and Non-refereed Journal Articles

Journal articles about student development can, generally, be categorized into three groups:

1. Experimental-analytical literature that describes populations, programs, activities, and treatments that attempt to determine causal relationships and that attempt to develop an understanding of changes in populations. Some of this literature derives further questions or hypotheses to be tested.
2. Descriptive literature that concentrates on describing program development and its execution, and is of an instructional nature. 3. Philosophical/essay articles that usually explore philosophical and pragmatic concerns of practitioners through reliance upon the breadth of the author's experience and knowledge of the field's historical past, practices, and precedents.

Experimental-Analytical Literature.

The experimental-analytical and quasi-experimental statistically driven articles are, with rare exception, directed, co-authored, or written by a faculty member and/or doctoral student seeking to convert his or her dissertation into a juried journal publication. These articles are so clouded by cautionary statements, short treatment periods, restrictive conditions such as sample size, non-generalizability, and disclaimers as to render the findings relatively valueless to the typical practitioner (for a comprehensive analysis of the research

literature, see Chapter IV). Most such articles are so permeated with highly sophisticated statistics as to render them unintelligible to the typical practitioner or graduate student who may never have grasped statistics beyond analysis of variance or factor analysis.

Experimental-analytical studies, we must agree, are needed for building the body of knowledge necessary for testing the efficacy of theory, are needed for teaching theory in practice, and are of value to other researchers who share similar skills and interests. However, we are inclined to believe that at the same time this literature possesses little utility for typical baccalaureate or master's degree level practitioners who, even if they could understand it, would be hard-pressed to apply the findings to their immediate work situation. As a consequence this literature is mostly ignored by non-researchers. Whatever their merits in advancing understanding of theory and/or practice, and regardless of their utility in advancing the researcher's career in academia, these studies mostly fall on deaf ears in the student's and practitioner's world.

Descriptive Literature.

The descriptive and descriptive-analytical literature found in our journals, while presented in a more understandable style, tends to possess somewhat more utility for master's level students and practitioners. This literature is useful in that complex statistical analyses and treatments are absent, and its authors are usually attempting to present processes for applying developmental theory in practice.

However, these articles are often plagued by opinion, overgeneralization, and inadequate or inappropriate evaluation techniques that undermine their integrity. Many are questionable in their approach and the means by which they attempt to bring about truly significant changes in students which can then be attributed directly to the intervention techniques employed. One of the more unfortunate and unexpected by-products of this type of literature is overzealousness among the unsophisticated and usually newer practitioners who, in

order to be "developmental," mimic these programs and procedures on their campuses with little regard for their own lack of understanding of the complexities of applying theory in practice, or the appropriateness of fit between the more-ideal environment of the authors and the less-than-ideal environment of the practitioner. It is in this context that the area of residential life on many campuses has become both an experimental setting and a graveyard for an untold number of poorly planned developmental programs.

Philosophical/Essay Literature.

The philosophical/essay articles about student development during a 13-year period numbered about 104 according to our analysis in Chapter IV. Although well-intentioned, they all too often appear to be affirmations of belief intended to persuade readers to place their trust and allegiance unequivocally in the elastic phrase, "student development" as a philosophy, a goal, a central purpose, a theory, a process, or an appropriate outcome of the profession's work.

These essays can be criticized on the grounds that in many instances they (a) are predicated upon false and unquestioned beliefs and assumptions about the universality of student development as the raison d'etre of student affairs; (b) may defy the rules of logic; (c) are contaminated with the popular and unintelligible jargon of the moment; (d) assume the universal acceptance and applicability of student development programs and processes regardless of institutional mission or setting; and (e) too often treat developmental theories as indisputable fact or law, thus seriously diminishing their credibility while misleading readers into believing that if they are not applying developmental theory, they are not practicing good student affairs work. Furthermore, they imply that knowledge of developmental theory is hierarchial in student affairs and that those who possess it are superior in educational expertise to those without it.

Textbooks and Text-practitioner Books

In the 1940s, the available texts for use in the pioneer student affairs preparation programs were limited to one or two books, usually written by a single author; were descriptive and somewhat prescriptive in nature; and were laced with a healthy dose of educational perspective and the Student Personnel Point of View (American Council on Education, 1937, 1949). The distinguishing feature of those texts was that their philosophical underpinnings, foundations if you will, were woven carefully and consistently throughout each chapter to provide a sense of cohesiveness and commonality of educational and service purposes across various functions and activities. Educational values were foremost as well as serving as an integral element of unit and divisional missions, goals, purposes, and functions. And of such values, those held appropriate and necessary for the education of students and those held necessary for the institution and the larger society, were unmistakably clear.

Perhaps the contemporary field of student affairs has grown too large and complex, and possibly too disparate and confusing, for a single author to encompass it adequately. But, it is interesting to observe that not one text of significance since Williamson (1961) and Mueller (1961) has been written by a single author. Today one can expect multiple authors, edited collections of journal articles, a single author and associates, or one or more authors and a multitude of contributors. With rare exceptions, nearly all such texts include the term "student development" or "development" in their titles and, more often than not, the title contains a colon. While the editor's preface may indicate that the contents of the text are directed toward practitioners, we recognize that the implicit audience for these publications consists of master's degree-level graduate students. This audience is chosen because no publisher will risk and possibly lose money on a small publishing run just to serve practitioners in student affairs who, for the most part, are not known as lifelong students of their profession nor as purchasers of professionally related texts.

By expanding the market audience to include graduate students, the publisher and authors improve their chance of breaking even financially or of making a profit.

Contemporary texts and practitioner-oriented books are generally comprised of chapters on the history of student affairs, inclusive of the student development movement starting in the 1970s; chapters on various human development theories that are deemed appropriate to college students; chapters on infusing student development theory into the campus workplace; chapters on legal relationships and discipline as related to developmental outcomes; chapters on assessment and evaluation of developmental programs and activities; and a smattering of chapters on administrative theory, administration, staffing, staff development, ethical behavior, and challenges or unresolved problems facing the profession. Very apparent to the reader and user of these books is the ubiquitous and imaginative use of the word, "development." It appears as a statement of philosophy, theory, process, and outcome, and it is used as a noun, adjective, and verb. A social or behavioral scientist might well view this cavalier and indiscriminate use of a term held so important to contemporary student affairs work as indicative of a very confused field struggling to become a profession and legitimate area of study.

Books written with a dual audience in mind (practitioners and graduate students) are all too often of little value to the practitioner who, most often, is looking for an overview of functions, administrative organization, staffing, and financing, and for some programming ideas that are simple to administer and easy to evaluate as an educational activity (notice that we did not use the term "developmental activity"). Administrators are searching for ideas and programs that are easily understood and applicable to the institutional context in which they find themselves, and in a form, content, and manner that is readily understood and accepted by a wide variety of audiences. Within their constituencies are students, faculty, parents, alumni, the media, legislators, and student affairs staff, most of whom are not conversant with the complex psychosocial

and cognitive developmental theories commonly employed, and the difficult route to their application in the workplace. Because this literature is generally directed toward students, it is doubtful that it is widely applicable to the general, day-to-day practices of the field or, for that matter, to changing them.

From the perspective of those who have been teaching masters-level graduate students, and keeping in mind their special characteristics, we have several observations concerning the textbook treatment of student development:

1. Graduate students agonize in their attempts to reconcile into some kind of consistent and cohesive professional philosophy the textbook mixture of the traditional Student Personnel Point of View (SPPV) philosophy (American Council on Education, 1949) and the humanistic assumptions, beliefs, and advocacies of student development. They praise the precision and clarity of the SPPV and the manner in which student, societal, and institutional goals are intermeshed, while simultaneously regarding with some caution the jargon-laden and confusing explanations of student development, which to them, fosters a mystique which seems to place process above substance.
2. The literature on developmental theory seemingly is based upon an assumption that graduate students in our field have been reasonably well-schooled in one or more of the behavioral sciences (psychology, sociology, or anthropology) or that they will readily become familiar with theory generation, testing, and application. As noted earlier, the great majority of our master's-level students come from undergraduate majors in the humanities, business, etc., where understanding theory may not be necessary for academic success. It is no wonder that students labor with great difficulty to gain even a modicum of understanding of developmental theory.

Compounding the frustration stemming from the graduate student's lack of behavioral science knowledge is the complexity of the examples and models employed in the literature to trans-

late theory into practice. Most master's programs do not provide for minor or cognate fields in a behavioral science which further exacerbates the problem students face in attempting to grasp the intricacies of developmental theory. 3. Assuming that most master's-level students are expected or required to apply student development theory in their assistantships or practicum settings, they are too often surrounded by staff and supervisors who themselves are not familiar with student development theory and thus are in no position to assist students in its application. And, unfortunately, the program faculty may be too preoccupied with classroom and other tasks to give direction and provide guidance in assistantship or practicum settings. Judging by the complexity of the program application examples provided in many texts, it is not surprising that graduate students and young practitioners are more than ready to seek out and function in administratively pragmatic settings while occasionally giving lip service to student development. The most common complaint that we have heard from practitioners and students over the past fifteen years has been directed toward the complexity and high degree of sophistication needed for operationalizing student development in the workplace, and the lack of simple, multiple models with broad applicability to a variety of institutional settings by relatively inexperienced staff. In addition, and not to be ignored, they seriously question the validity of the theories that have been so zealously advocated in their textbooks and by their professors (see Chapter III).

Monographs and the Jossey-Bass Paperback Series

Monographs published for the student affairs field have, for the most part, been sponsored by the American College Personnel Association (ACPA), and, to a lesser degree, by the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA). In addition, a paperback series, New Directions for Student Services, is published by Jossey-Bass Publishers of San Francisco, a commercial concern.

ACPA Monographs. In reviewing monographs published by the ACPA since 1970, it becomes quite apparent that the Association's policies regarding its publication responsibilities have broadened. For example, the name of the Monograph Publication Board was changed to the Media Publication Board during the early 1970s which led to the revision of the policy limiting its publications to monographs (usually running 150 pages or less, soft bound, and on 8 1/2 by 11 inch paper), to its present policy of publishing a variety of books, films, and other forms of media as well as monographs.

Since 1970, ACPA has published approximately 27 monographs, 11 books, and a number of directories. Of the monographs, only three can be classified as having a substantial portion of their contents devoted to discussions of student development concepts, philosophy, theory, and application of theory to contemporary student affairs practices: Whiteley and Sprandel's, *The Growth and Development of College Students* (1970); Brown's seminal work, *Student Development in Tomorrow's Higher Education: A Return to the Academy* (1972); and Kuh, Whitt, and Shedd's, *Student Affairs Work, 2001: A Paradigmatic Odyssey* (1987), in which the authors seriously challenge the utility and relevance of the student development movement and its theories to the rapidly changing composition of today's collegiate student body.

The remaining 24 monographs have ranged in content and emphasis from women in student affairs work (Gelwick, 1979), through other specialized topic areas dealing with specific functions or unit program areas such as fraternities and sororities (Bryan & Schwartz, 1983), student leadership (Roberts, 1982), student career services (McKensie & Manoogian-O'Dell, 1988), and student group advising (Schuh, 1987).

It is quite apparent that in reviewing ACPA's monographs that the interests of authors in the field of student affairs and the concerns and interests of practitioners are primarily centered upon the administration of services and programs, organizational structures, efficiency and effectiveness in achieving tangible results, and in financing, staffing, and

managing the day-to-day activities of the student affairs division. While the authors of these publications may have mentioned student development as an objective or a goal, the contents of the more typical monograph have instead tended to center upon understanding the role, place, function, and administration of the student affairs unit, along with its staffing, finances, budgeting, program development, administration, coordination, and evaluation.

This is not to contend that ACPA's Media Publication Board has neglected the perceived importance of student development. It is to note, however, that if demand dictates supply and supply's content, this demand is driven more by the day-to-day programmatic concerns and needs of practitioners who seem to be administratively oriented toward traditional outcome measures than by the outcomes that may devolve from the student development model.

ACPA has responded to its commitment to student development primarily through the books it has published under the auspices of its Media Publications Board. A review of its eleven or so books reveals that approximately five can be said to devote a considerable amount of their content to student development theory, its application, and its evaluation. Examples include *Student Development and Education in College Residence Halls* (DeCoster & Mable, 1974); *Student Development in Higher Education: Theories, Practices andFuture Directions* (Creamer, 1980), and *College Student Development Theory and Practice in the 1990s* (Creamer & Associates, 1990).

On the whole, given ACPA's early leadership role in the student development movement, its lackluster T.H.E. Project, its insistence upon interjecting the words "development" or "developmental" into nearly every sponsored association activity and convention program over the years, and its support of student development research and generativity projects, it is surprising that so few of its publications have been devoted to the application of student development in the workplace, especially in simplified form for the paraprofessional practitioner.

*NASPA Monographs.*When comparing NASPA's publications with those of ACPA, it becomes apparent that ACPA's commitment to create and disseminate a body of professional literature for the field has been significant, relatively comprehensive, and of high priority. Since 1970, ACPA has published in excess of 50 monographs and books in contrast to NASPA's production of 18 similar publications.

Employing our own definition of what constitutes the difference between monographs and books, addressed earlier, a review of NASPA's recent publications reveals only two monographs that are principally devoted to problems, practices, and conditions for promoting student development in the collegiate environment: Creamer and Dessance's *Opportunities for Student Development in Two-Year Colleges* (1986), and Kuh and Schuh's *The Role and Contribution of Student Affairs in Involving Colleges* (1991). Unfortunately, in the case of the Creamer and Dessance monograph, there is too little which deals directly with application of theory to practice, especially in a manner that might directly assist the typical paraprofessional in understanding and applying developmental theory. (This is not to fault the authors, since space limitations imposed upon such publications precludes this kind of detailed accommodation.) In Kuh and Schuh's publication, student affairs staff are urged to support and promote student involvement in learning within and outside of the classroom—an interesting and successful concept which seems to have come full circle since it was the approach almost universally advocated and manifested by the leaders of student affairs during the 1940s and 1950s, and without the benefit of the formalized theory available to today's student affairs professions.

As was the case with the ACPA, NASPA's publications during a twenty-year period were devoted principally to administration, *e.g.*, mid-management (Young, 1990), the application of Japanese management theories (Deegan, Steele, & Thielen, 1985), enrollment management (Galsky, 1991), and professional concerns such as the development of mid-management staff (Young, 1990), the guidance and nurturance of

new professionals (Coleman & Johnson, 1990), and careers and career development (Kirby & Woodard, 1964).

Other more institution-wide concerns were addressed by NASPA as well, *e.g.*, alcohol policies and practices (Sherwood, 1987), minority student retention (Terrell & Wright, 1989), campus dissent and freedom issues (Miser, 1988), and international students (McIntire & Willer, 1992), to name a few.

The percentage of NASPA sponsored publications devoted substantially to advancing student development theory, is relatively small (approximately 12%) in comparison with its apparent concern for professional growth and development, and for the more administratively oriented, pragmatic day-to-day functions and activities that tend to dominate the practice of student affairs and general higher education administration.

Jossey-Bass New Directions in Student Services Series. The Jossey-Bass Publishers of San Francisco decided a number of years ago to sponsor a relatively inexpensive paperback series of four books a year that would respond and contribute to the needs and interests of the college student affairs field, its New Directions in Student Services series. Since its first year of publication, in 1978, it has contributed some sixty separate paperback books on a wide variety of topics covering nearly every function normally associated with a typical student affairs division's responsibilities on the college and university campus.

With rare exceptions, its individual volumes have had one or more persons serving as editors, and a multitude of individual authors contributing chapters. Most appear to be written from a need-based perspective and are directed more to the practitioner in the field than to faculty, theoreticians, or advocates of student development.

Of the approximately sixty publications in the series to date, about eleven (or one-sixth), are driven by a central and persistent student development theme, *e.g.*, the measurement of student development (Hanson, 1982), developmental academic advising (Winston, Ender, & Miller, 1982), evolving theories

(Moore, 1990), or contain partial or limited references to student development, *e.g.*, handicapped students (Sprandel & Schmidt, 1980), and commuter students (Stewart, 1983). Characteristic of the literature manifesting the central theme of student development is the attention given to representative and emerging theories of student development (Moore, 1990), and instruments created to measure developmental outcomes, while, with one exception, less attention is focused on the pragmatic or operational aspects of application or student development in the work setting of programs and services (Winston, Ender, & Miller, 1992).

Given the longevity of the Jossey-Bass series, one can safely conclude that the publisher has provided a basic service in publishing easily read and understood specialized manuals which appear to be highly responsive to the needs of practitioners who want to access the fundamental principles, programs, practices, and techniques available for administering the individual units, services, and programs typically found in a division of student affairs. In this respect, the publisher cannot be faulted for providing a needed service for the profession. Apparent in its overall emphasis within the entire series is an unspoken perspective of the importance of day-to-day practices and concerns of the typically pragmatic practitioner who appears to evince little interest in either the application of student development theory or the overall student development movement.

In summary, it appears that of the literature available to the student affairs field published as monographs or paperback books (and occasionally as hardbacks by ACPA and NASPA) over the past two decades, approximately 9% can be said to be principally devoted to advancing the concept, theories, and practice of student development. Fortunately, most of these publications have been written with the practitioner in mind and have avoided much of the jargon, complexity, and pedantry that have all too often been evident in professional journal articles, conference presentations, and books sponsored by academic institutions and commercial book publishers.

Professional Needs Neglected by the Student Development Literature

We have critically examined the published professional literature that purports to be developmental. Of equal, if not greater, concern are the educational issues to which the literature on student development has given little attention or has neglected altogether.

Reinforcing a surface as well as subliminal notion that the field of student affairs is moving further and further away from Brown's "Return to the Academy" (Brown, 1972) are the standards for student affairs professional preparation programs (Council for the Advancement of Standards [CAS], 1986), and the nature, content, and experiences required of master's-level graduate students.

The history and philosophy of higher education are rarely found as core courses in such programs, yet they are essential to understanding the environment and the values which shape and direct the programs as well as the pedagogical techniques employed by collegiate institutions. Further, knowledge of the various theories and philosophies of higher education that underlie the curriculum, budget, and institutional values is fundamental to comprehending the basis upon which student affairs can work collaboratively with faculty in achieving the educational goals of institutions and their students. Without such knowledge graduate students and staff can only hypothesize about their appropriate role and educative function. Student affairs will remain peripheral to the academic arena, if its staff continues to be uninformed about the foundations considered essential for initiating serious discussions about collaboration with the faculty.

Nowhere in the CAS standards nor in most of the student development literature is the general education curriculum mentioned as worthy of study, or even considered for the powerful effect it exerts upon the growth and education of students through the faculty—the collegiate institution's most influential educational role models. Rarely does the professional

literature of recent years present examples of systematic attempts to create, coordinate, and integrate cocurricular programming with the essential content of general education course requirements to which all students are exposed even though these cocurricular activities could better assure the achievement of general education's goals.

Taking the assertions of developmental literature to heart, that staff are, or should become, student development experts, student affairs staff members have created environments that appear to ensure that the faculty will be responsible for the academic development of students between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. Student development experts will then take their turn in "developing the whole person" between the hours of 5:00 p.m. and 8:00 a.m. and through the weekend. The contradiction in this assertion is apparent as is the presumption.

The literature, the advocacies, the overreaching for near-immediate professional legitimacy and respect as co-equals of the faculty have thrust student development practitioners into postures and practices that assure an increased distancing of their activities and programs from the central purpose of the collegiate institution—the intellectual and educational development of students. Justifiably, they can be accused of hubris or vainglorousness.

Standards for Professional Literature

After reviewing the recent literature of student affairs, particularly as it relates to student development, it appeared to us that, with some notable exceptions, much of it did not relate to the improvement of practice in the field. If the professional literature is to affect practice in positive ways, we believe that it should meet the following five standards:

1. It should be addressed to and written at the level of those practitioners who work most directly with the college students who are at the center of the field's mission and concerns—all college students and not just the 15% who are living on campus and who are between 18 and 22 years of age;

2. It should be written in a manner that is reasonably congruent with the professional preparation, understanding, knowledge, skill level, and experience of practitioners;
3. It should take into account the wide variety of types of institutional settings and missions within which practitioners work;
4. It should be written in easily understood, jargon-free language and should provide for readily adaptable procedures, practices, and programs; and,
5. It should provide for evaluative methodologies that are responsive to the need for improving program effectiveness and are easily understood by practitioners and those who supervise their work.

Unfortunately, insofar as we are able to discern, much of the student development literature published over the past fifteen years does not meet many of these standards, let alone all of them.

Conclusion

In this chapter we have concluded that the literature of student development (a) is all too often written with a minority of highly sophisticated practitioners in mind, and thus remains relatively exclusive to that population; (b) possesses very little content of utility or relevance to the typical student affairs practitioner; (c) is often seriously flawed or negatively affected because of opinion, overgeneralization, and a paucity of easily implemented program models which can be used by the typical practitioner; (d) tends to ignore or brush off the need for educational philosophy, learning theory, and pedagogy in successful practice by student affairs educators and service providers; (e) confuses rather than clarifies the meaning of student development through its use as a noun, verb, and adjective as well as a philosophy, mission, goal, theory, process, and outcome; (f) provides theories which are generally far from having been validated and which are too complex for the typical practitioner to understand, let alone attempt to

apply in the work context; (g) does not meet our five standards for affecting practice; and (h) does not take into account the level of preparation and background of the majority of student affairs practitioners.

This review and analysis of student development literature has underlined many problems and raised a number of professional concerns for the field of student affairs as it continues to evolve and struggle in its quest to achieve a clear and unambiguous identity and status as a profession. It is in this context that student development within the practice of student affairs will continue to be outside of the academic mainstream until such time as the field is infused with a healthy sense of realism.

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Chapter VI

An Examination of Student Development in Professional Practice

Any new idea, concept, or fad that is adopted by the field of student affairs eventually must stand the test of daily practice. In this regard, the field is fundamentally practitioner-oriented—a fact which, in and of itself, may suggest that student affairs professionals value theory (if at all) only to the extent that it helps to direct their practice. An exploration of the effectiveness of student development theory as it has informed the practice of college student affairs is the focus of this chapter. To this end, two vantage points will be explored: 1) what should be the relationship between theory and practice in any professional field? and, 2) what is the relationship between the student development model and student affairs practice?

What Should be the Relationship Between Theory and Practice?

Fundamentally, theory and practice in any professional field of endeavor should be inseparable. As Kurt Lewin's oft-quoted maxim suggests, "there is nothing as practical as a good theory" (cited in Marrow, 1969, p. ix). Or, to paraphrase his aphorism, if a theory were good, there would be nothing more practical.

Indeed, it is the role of theory to organize what is known and, through such, to generate propositions about what is

unknown, presumably toward the ultimate goal of offering direction for practice. Theory offers the basis whereby research incubates its premises into knowledge; the outcome then provides direction for practice. Similarly, practice offers an arena both for applying that knowledge and for generating problems for further theory/knowledge incubation. The result is that theory and practice are, ideally, inseparable. What is theoretical in a professional field is understood as integral to how that understanding is reflected in its actions/activities (practice). Accordingly, a body of knowledge within a field exists to serve as the fundamental rationale for its practice, offering, according to Greenwood (1957), a conceptual framework internally consistent with the way the field does business.

Contrary to this ideal and to aspirations for rising above basic dualism, many fields experience a dichotomy between theory and practice. Thus, the development of ways of thinking and talking about the phenomena of a field are divorced from the activity-arena in which the thinking and talking grow from the direct experience of doing. This dichotomy is not as it should be.

Rather, what should be the case is an integrating or blending together of theory and practice. One without the other (thinking without doing or doing without thinking) all-too-readily yields sterile outcomes in either part. Thinking and talking about content (*i.e.*, facts, theories, sequences, rules, etc.), without action, may lead to a verbal glibness which frequently cannot be translated into action. On the other hand, acting on the basis of anecdotal experience and unverified judgment, without content, can turn professional practice into an undisciplined playground wherein practitioners learn precious little about conceptualization, the power of generalization, or the rationale for their field. Together the two components of theory and practice embroil a profession in a strong interaction of learning and the testing of that learning through experience. Here, the artificial gulf between ideas and action—theory and practice—is bridged enabling professionals to learn ideas for action—theory for practice. This is what should, in

the best of all possible worlds, constitute the relationship between theory and practice.

What Is the Relationship Between the Student Development Model and Student Affairs Practice?

To address this question, two broad responses are offered. First, the student development model has made some significant contributions to student affairs practice and second, and obversely, student development theory has created some significant problems for the student affairs practitioner.

Contributions: A Partial List

We have identified six specific areas in which student development has contributed to student affairs: (a) the provision of a needed new role for student affairs practitioners, (b) the establishment of a linkage to the academy and a revision of purpose, (c) the planning of development for students, (d) the identification of a rationale for programs and interventions, (e) the provision of additional political savvy for practitioners, and (f) the strengthening of the profession's research focus. Each of these areas is discussed briefly below.

Provision of a needed new role for student affairs practitioners.

While student affairs professionals had for many years perceived a role for themselves, not only as service providers but as "educators" within the co-curriculum, student development theory appeared to legitimize this educational role as the profession evolved. Plato (1978) contends that the current practice of student affairs evolved from the original functions of controlling student behavior (which eroded with the growth of student self-regulation and the sharing of discipline—once exclusively the role of student affairs practitioners—with faculty and students) and representing student opinion (which eroded with the growth of student rights and the increased numbers of older, adult students well able to represent themselves). Given this erosion and evolution, "the logical step for student personnel was to expand the remaining role of

'expert'" (Plato, 1978, p. 34). Student development theory, offered a mechanism for this change by providing a basis upon which to claim the needed expertise. As Plato writes:

> *A new purpose statement evolved that was based on the theories of human development. The model delineated the growth process of the college student and then described the process by which individual counselors or administrators aid this process. All members of the organization are assigned the responsibility for a related phase of the experience.*

The "new" approach is broad enough to include all positions in the field from the entry level "worker" to the chief student personnel officer. It is specific enough to denote an area of specialization or expertise, yet it is not so radically different as to be noticed if some institutions choose not to reflect the trappings of the new label. The result is the perfect type of organizational rationale—it gives the appearance of change, without being radically different from what currently exists. (1978, p. 34)

Establishment of a linkage to the academy and a revision of purpose.

Student development theory offered a content base and conceptual means whereby student affairs professionals, sometimes perceived by academics as service-providers only, were able to link their contributions more closely to the academic mission of higher education and legitimate an educational role in addition to that of service-provider, *i.e.*, developmentalist, developmental specialist, student development educator, etc. This revised integration of roles provided many practitioners with a renewed sense of purpose and importance in their work and gave them a sense of equality with faculty, a sense which, unfortunately, was not reciprocated by the faculty.

Planning of development for students.

Student development theory provided a conceptual means for bringing "intentionality" and deliberate planning to an

otherwise potentially haphazard, yet hoped-for, outcome of higher education, *i.e.*, the whole development of students. Because student development theory delineates (at least conceptually) the components that comprise a well-rounded individual, it should be possible theoretically to provide learning experiences during the college years to assure that these characteristics are developed. Thus, it ought to be possible to plan for development to ensure that it actually happens.

Program and intervention rationale.

Student development theory offered a basis upon which to ground interventions, develop programs, and integrate processes—at least at the level of professional rhetoric. For example, a student development practitioner should be able to take one of Chickering's (1969) seven vectors and translate it into a specific program aimed at ensuring that students develop in that given area. In truth, however, professionals in the field rarely use student development theory in this manner. Instead, student development theory typically provides an a posteriori rationale for the use of specific interventions or programs, attempting to explain what student affairs staff does at those times when a rationale is necessary. Prior to the adoption of a developmental theory orientation, programming was explained on the basis of anticipated educational or learning outcomes, even on the whims or preferences of the individual planning the program.

Political savvy.

Drawing upon the linkage of student affairs to the academic mission and the contribution of its expertise pertaining to students, many student affairs practitioners were significantly assisted by the claims and vocabulary of the student development movement in justifying positions and protecting and/or building budgets. Insofar as education is the primary mission of any collegiate institution, academic endeavors receive priority when funds are allocated. Prior to the advent of the student development movement, the

focus of college student affairs was the out-of-class experience of students, an experience considered by many in the professoriate to be not only extra-curricular, but also extraneous to the primary academic mission of the institution. The student development movement purported to provide the student affairs profession with a basis for equating the extracurriculum to the cocurriculum and thus, in theory at least, rendering it the equivalent of the curriculum. and enabling its professionals to style themselves as "educators," presumably now co-equal with faculty educators.

Research focus.

Student development theory has raised a number of questions regarding why student affairs practitioners do what they do and with what effect. This curiosity has spurred some practitioners to probe their practice beyond anecdotal claims and to contribute their findings to the larger field. For example, the May, 1992 issue of the *Journal of College Student Development* contained articles examining the influence of cocurricular activities on the intellectual development of college students (Baxter Magolda, 1992), identity and moral development of Greek Students based on the works of both Chickering and Kohlberg (Kilgannon & Erwin, 1992), and construction of a leadership development instrument for college students (Posner & Brodsky, 1992). Such articles assist in extending the research base of the field and provide an empirical rationale for intentional programming efforts on college campuses.

In conclusion, it is evident that the concept of student development has contributed significantly to student affairs practice. Specifically, it provided the profession with a needed new role, that of expert on students. This new role was intended to help elevate student affairs practitioners from service-providers to student development educators, thus fostering a closer alignment with the primary educational mission of the institution. Further, the concept, albeit supported by theory, also enabled practitioners to focus more intentionally on the planned development of college students

and provided a rationale for the field's programming and intervention efforts on college campuses. Lastly, the theoretical orientation of student development encouraged a research focus for the profession and a renewed impetus for furthering the theory base of college, undergirding, if not justifying, the field's existence.

Problems: A Partial Listing

Although the student development model has made some significant contributions to the field of student affairs, it also has created a number of problems. These problems include (a) the abundance of theories; (b) the diversity in preparation of student affairs practitioners; (c) the ambiguous directions for application of theories to practice; (d) the pragmatic/anti-theory bias of student affairs practitioners; (e) the generic, rather than specific, understanding of theories on the part of practitioners; (f) the indiscriminate use of theory; (g) the lack of critique of student development theory; (h) the use of theory as prescription; (i) the differing applications of theory; and (j) the overstatement of bandwagon claims. Each of these problems is discussed briefly below.

Abundance of theories.

The sheer volume of available theories renders the choice and implementation of an appropriate theory into practice difficult (Stage, 1991). Related to this over-abundance of theories is the absence of an overarching meta-theory or paradigm within which to integrate or incorporate the varied and diverse concepts pertinent to the field. Hence, practice based on theory (or theories) is inconsistent and/or arbitrary at best.

Diversity in background/preparation.

Student affairs practitioners come to the field from a variety of educational backgrounds and work experiences. Indeed, in some institutions a baccalaureate degree may be sufficient for

appointment to certain student affairs positions. Thus, staff familiarity with individual student development theories may vary greatly—a contingency which renders common understanding and application extremely difficult if not at times impossible.

Ambiguous directions for application of theory to practice.

Many of the theories of student development are themselves descriptive; yet when they are adopted by professionals in the field, they are often applied in a prescriptive manner, inferring prescriptive protocols beyond those addressed in the theories. In short, the theories of student development may themselves be clear, but the means by which a set of specific practices derives from theory is not (Bloland, 1986a). The link is often intuitive, logical, or inferential and is even described as such in some of the literature (King & Fields, 1980). Unfortunately, however, this link is seldom direct. As a result, the manner in which theory is applied, or even whether theory is applied at all, becomes a matter of personal preference rather than professional judgment.

Pragmatic/anti-theory bias of student affairs practitioners.

As with many applied disciplines, student affairs tends to attract practitioners who are pragmatists and who, therefore, may maintain an implicit or explicit anti-theory bias. As such, student affairs practitioners tend to take great liberties in spanning the apparent gulf between theory and practice. And, as King and Fields (1980) contend, instead of spending adequate time in theoretical considerations, practitioners lean heavily upon their intuition, their personal experiences as former college students themselves, or "...formal and informal discussions with colleagues about what works and what doesn't" (p. 543). Such an anti-theory bias renders the further development of research-based knowledge difficult to achieve and serves to maintain student affairs as a field based more on opinion than theory or substance.

Generic, not specific, understanding of student development theory.

Unfortunately, the diverse backgrounds and anti-theory bias of practitioners, not to mention the heavy demands on practitioner time, tend to encourage what King and Fields (1980) call a generic, rather than specific, familiarity with theory. Even in student affairs preparation programs and residence hall internships, theory is often treated in such a cursory manner that superficiality of theoretical knowledge and understanding is perpetuated in practice. As a result, practice based on theory may be grounded on no more than a cursory reading of a particular theory or, even worse, the assumption that theory can be grasped when read only in the form of a previously digested, over-simplified handout or grocery list of characteristics, attributes, and/or vectors. Theory suffers greatly (as does practice) when it is applied with no greater understanding or sophistication than a pop-psychology or jargon-level perspective. The danger here is for one to listen to a few notes and believe he/she has heard the entire symphony, *e.g.*, to have a list of Chickering's (1969) seven vectors and, hence, to presume to understand *Education and Identity* as a book or a process.

Indiscriminate use of theory on the part of practitioners.

There is a tendency on the part of some practitioners to apply theory to various aspects of practice without adequately weighing its appropriateness. Stage (1991) emphasizes the importance of considering the culture of an institution as well as the individual student population in choosing and applying student development theories. Attempts to force all students and student services into a theoretical framework not only dilutes the meaning of theory but also seems to suggest an implicit denigration of those services which do not claim to have a developmental impact per se. Further, to the extent that theory has been used indiscriminately to alter job descriptions (Bloland, 1986c), if not the primary function of the field itself, student affairs practitioners may have neglected the

development of other roles they might play in meeting the needs of students and in providing just plain good service.

Lack of critique of student development theory.

Both Bloland (1986a, 1986b) and Plato (1978) have noted the almost unwavering acceptance of student development theory by the profession and called for a healthy dialogue and critique regarding its merits. The lack of such a critique has resulted in an inconsistency in the choice of theories used in practice as well as a "brass-ring-like" devotion to the concept of student development as a gestalt (Stamatakos, 1987). Even more importantly, it has given rise to the unwritten assumption that all theories are universally applicable and that perspectives to the contrary are tantamount to professional heresy.

Theory as prescription.

Bloland (1986c) has questioned the tendency to use student development theories to predict outcomes. As mentioned in our earlier chapter on student development research and evaluation, many research studies in the area of student development have either mixed results or questionable internal validity. Thus, the question which remains unanswered is whether theory-based interventions result in "the enhancement of student growth beyond that which might be expected in the normal course of events" (Bloland, 1986b, p. 1). The evidence to date by no means universally supports that it does.

Student development as a theory versus an organizing framework.

While the literature is replete with articles on theory-based practice, in reality few, if any, practitioners or faculty actually apply theory to practice in a pure form. Rather, the tendency is to take individual concepts or commonalities of theories and use them to develop an organizing framework for designing interventions (King & Fields, 1980; Stage, 1991). This tendency results in both a lack of consistent choice and

application of theories and a consequent difficulty in comparing the efficacy of individual theories across programs and settings

Bandwagon claims.

In the theories of student development themselves and/or in the application of those theories, the premises of intentionality and romantic humanism may well have overstated what is possible in the area of human development. The problems of applying student development theory to daily practice begins to suggest that perhaps Victor Frankl's assertion merits some consideration: Frankl (1959) contended that self-actualization cannot be a matter of direct intention and that it, indeed, becomes self-defeating to intend one's own development as a primary purpose. What one can intend is meaning; development is a secondary outcome. If one accepts Frankl's assertion, then student development theory may well be ineffective as the guiding paradigm of the profession. Development can and will happen for college students as a consequence of the meaning of the total complex college experience, rather than as a result of participation in a specific program or intervention.

In summary, the concept of student development has created problems for the field of college student affairs in two general areas: 1) the inherent nature of the theories themselves, and 2) the application of theories in the practice arena. The abundance of student development theories as well as their varied and diverse nature results in fragmentation and highlights the lack of an overarching paradigm for describing how student development happens. Many of the theories also fail to delineate the specific interventions that could be used to enable or even encourage development in a given area.

Application of theory to practice is rendered problematic, both by the diversity of practitioner preparation in the field of college student affairs and the pragmatic, anti-theory bias of many of its practitioners. Because student affairs practitioners come from a variety of backgrounds, one cannot assume

that all practitioners possess the same knowledge-base. Some individuals may have had no previous exposure to theories of student development or their application. Furthermore, even many of those holding master's or doctoral degrees in college student affairs tend to base their practice more on personal experience than on theoretical considerations. This less-than-scholarly approach to the field often results in a cursory understanding of various theories and their arbitrary use in the practice setting. Rather than critiquing and analyzing student development as a gestalt or as individual theories, practitioners have tended to use theory as a prescription or to make extravagant claims about its effectiveness.

Conclusion

At the beginning of this chapter, the ideal relationship between theory and practice was described. Theory and practice in this optimum situation are viewed as inseparable. The body of knowledge (*i.e.*, theory) within a field is intended to serve as the fundamental rationale for its practice.

In analyzing the relationship between student development theory and the practice of student affairs, it is abundantly evident that the relationship is far from ideal. While some of the reasons have been discussed earlier, perhaps the fundamental reason for the dichotomy between theory and practice in student affairs is that practice existed long before there was a theory base to support it. Throughout the 1940s , 1950s, and 1960s student affairs practitioners existed in large measure to fulfill a service need on college campuses. Thus, initially student affairs practice resulted, not from a theory-base but, rather, from a service-base. Not until the 1970s did the field begin to talk about student development and student development theory and the application of these concepts to the practice arena. As a result, the field has sought to justify its actions a posteriori, a stance that is problematic for any profession seeking to build a solid theoretical foundation.

To bring theory and practice in the field of college student affairs into a more ideal alignment necessitates a reexamination

of both student development theory and current student affairs practice. In particular, an ongoing critique of the student development model as well as a review of individual student development theories is warranted. Research studies need to be conducted to determine whether the various student development theories are valid and, if so, with what populations and under what circumstances. Conversely, research findings need to be applied in the practice setting and practices altered based on the development of new knowledge. Without a continuing commitment to the realignment of theory and practice in the field of student affairs, the artificial gulf between ideas and actions, theory and practice, which exists in the field today, will certainly continue to plague it in the future.

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Chapter VII

A Reappraisal of the Role of Student Affairs

Our intention in this monograph has been to critically examine and reappraise student development as an educational reform movement within the field of student affairs with the objective of stimulating discussion, if not debate, relative to the present course and the future evolution of the field. To this end, and through the first six chapters, we examined and evaluated the student development model from a number of perspectives to weigh its adequacy as the raison d'etre of the student affairs profession. These perspectives included an assessment of student development as (a) a reform movement, (b) a philosophy, (c) a theoretical basis for the profession, (d) a research base, (e) a professional literature, and (f) a foundation for professional practice. From each of these perspectives, student development was found wanting.

Our intent in this concluding chapter is to summarize the findings and conclusions of our analysis as presented in the preceding six chapters, and then to suggest a redirection of the role of student affairs in American higher education which addresses the inadequacies of the student development model while recognizing the undeniable contribution it has made to the way in which student affairs practitioners think about the organization and execution of their work.

Recapitulating the Findings

In Chapter I, a number of problems and concerns with student development as a reform movement in student affairs were identified. One of the more serious problems concerned the uncritical adoption of the student development model by many in the field of student affairs without the kind of thorough comparative analysis, review, and debate that might have modified or precluded some of the more fanciful interpretations of the model. In spite of this lack of criticism or debate, the concept was welcomed by both student affairs scholars and practitioners who viewed it as offering a new expertise as well as much-needed scholarly credibility for student affairs practitioners. Other problems included an exaggeration of the hoped-for effects of theory-based program interventions, the lack of research to validate the claims of improved programming and enhanced development, the stifling of alternative paradigms or perspectives, and the advancement of personal development over the societal goals of higher education, among others.

Chapter II examined and challenged the premise that student development serves as an adequate statement of professional philosophy for the field of student affairs. The concept of student development, as delineated in the document entitled "Student Development Services in Post-Secondary Education" (COSPA, 1975), was compared with the Student Personnel Point of View (American Council on Education, 1949) as well as against four components of a professional philosophy: basic principles, values, role and functions, and identity). This comparison suggested that the student development model was deficient and inadequate as a philosophy. Its deficiencies included a disregard for the mission, goals, and roles of higher education itself as well as its relationship to the larger society; an inherent value system that views the development of students as an end in itself and as seemingly accomplishable apart from the curriculum; a failure to recognize the field's heritage,

contributions, and successes as well as essential functions and services; and a disregard for the essential learnings that are critical to successful practice including pedagogy, learning theory, and the history and philosophy of higher education.

Chapter III revealed serious deficiencies in student development theory relative to six criteria of effective theory: logical coherence, generalizability, testability, significance, contribution to understanding, and simplicity. It was pointed out that the field of student affairs has no single student development theory nor does it have a meta-theory to guide practitioners in selecting among its array of theories. In point of fact, student development theory per se does not exist; instead the field has a disparate collection of theoretical perspectives from which various theories are selected campus-by-campus, professional-by-professional. To say that student affairs practice has moved through the use of theory beyond arbitrary action based upon the personal whims of individual practitioners is merely to move the issue of arbitrariness from action to choice of theory.

In Chapter IV, three major areas related to research on student development were examined: the effectiveness of theory-based student development interventions, the types of research designs and approaches employed, and the nature and quality of the research. The assessment identified a number of methodological problems characteristic of student development research including an inadequate use of control or comparison groups, insufficient time in treatment, results subject to sample selection bias, and differential treatment of sample populations to name several. Few qualitative research studies or reviews of the literature have been published in the journals while not enough studies have been published on any one topic to allow for integrative research reviews. While many theories are available, little work is being done to validate current theory or to generate new theory applicable to today's increasingly diverse student population. In spite of the availability of an increasing variety of sophisticated research tools, it has not added measurably to our understanding of student

development and its application. We suggested that the creation of a unified and coherent theoretical and knowledge base has been inhibited by a multiplicity of developmental variables and assessment instrument and tools.

The critique of student development literature offered in Chapter V brought out a number of concerns as well. In view of the proclaimed commitment of the field to the student development model, the ratio of student development publications to the total amount of professional literature published would seem to be very low. In addition, the literature appears to provides little material useful to the average student affairs professional,being flawed in its overreliance on opinion, its tendency to overgeneralize, and its promotion of complex and unvalidated theories while providing little in the way of easily applied program models. The literature also incorporates little educational philosophy, learning theory, and pedagogy in the development and implementation of educational programs.

In Chapter VI, the ideal relationship between theory and practice was presented and, subsequently, evaluated against the student development model and its theory-base. The relative strengths and weaknesses or assets and liabilities of the student development model as it is implemented in daily practice were examined. In terms of its contribution, student development was expected to provide the profession with a basis upon which to claim expertise regarding students, *i.e.*, a new role purporting to elevate student affairs practitioners from being service-providers to student development educators and, thus, becoming more closely aligned with the faculty. However, we found little evidence to support this claim in practice. Developmental theory also enabled practitioners to focus more intentionally upon planning and providing a rationale for various forms of program interventions. Finally, student development theory provided a theoretical foundation for the field and a theory base for the development of a more sophisticated research approach.

On the other hand, student development has created a number of difficulties for the field of student affairs. Some

of the major concerns relevant to the application of student development theory to daily practice included an overabundance of theories; a diversity in professional preparation that may have compromised the application of theory in the workplace; ambiguous and ill-conceived directions for applying theory in practice; a pragmatic, anti-theory bias of student affairs practitioners; a general rather than specific practitioner understanding of theories which has led to unjustified administrative title changes and indiscriminate and unsophisticated developmental programming of questionable value; few scholarly critiques of student development; the use of theory as prescription; widely differing applications of theory; and finally, an overstatement of the benefits of theory when applied in the workplace.

In brief, when examined from any one of a variety of perspectives, the student development model raises questions that render its early wholehearted and uncritical acceptance by student affairs of grave concern to thinking professionals in the field. Alternative approaches are warranted and needed to provide direction to the field in the future.

Reconsidering the Role of Student Affairs

Assuming our analysis is reasonably accurate and our conclusions appropriate, what, then, is the field of student affairs to do? If the reform that the student development movement promised is seriously flawed as a core rationale for the field, where next does the field turn? What do professionals have to show for the years and careers which have been dedicated to the promulgation of the student development model? In addressing these questions, we found ourselves taking refuge yet one more time in the logic of "first things first." We begin with an exploration of the mission of higher education with particular reference to how that mission is related to students. The general education view of wholeness is considered. We then examine the role of student affairs in the mission of higher education, calling for a reaffirmation of the centrality of the educational function in that role.

The Mission and Purpose of Higher Education

The question of the mission of higher education is hardly new. In fact, within the last decade alone at least three major reports, *To Reclaim a Legacy* (Bennett, 1984), *Involvement in Learning* (Study Group on the Conditions of Excellence, 1984), and *Integrity in the College Curriculum* (Association of American Colleges, 1985), have probed this and analogous questions even as they decried the present condition of higher education. The National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA), in its 1987 report, *A Perspective on Student Affairs*, also weighed in on the question by stating that,

> *The traditional purposes of higher education are to preserve, transmit, and create knowledge; to encourage personal development; and to serve society. In addition, college and university programs help individuals cope with significant life transitions—from adolescence to adulthood, from dependence to personal autonomy, from one occupation to another. (p. 6)*

Educational mission statements are usually presented as broad generalizations, later to be expanded upon in a series of goal statements that, when combined and translated into action in the campus community, will lead to the achievement of the overall institutional mission. That mission is to be accomplished in part through the education and development of students who acquire those skills, competencies, understandings, and values that will enable them to contribute to the solution of social problems, the administration of public affairs, the enrichment of the larger society, the perpetuation of democracy, and the advancement of international understanding.

From the admittedly broad base of an institution's mission, educators are expected in an albeit difficult tension both to fulfill the mission as defined and to redefine it. In so doing, campus-by-campus, the meaning of the mission is uniquely established and reestablished over and over in light of the

current contingencies facing each campus vis-a-vis its faculty, administrators, and students and their view of the world of today and tomorrow. What it means to be whole or developed in accordance with a particular college or university's mission is then preserved in the autonomous domain of that campus and maintained as the purview, not of one subset of the bureaucracy of the campus such as student affairs, but of all of its colleges and divisions.

However the college or university may define its mission, it becomes a reality primarily through the efforts of the instructional faculty. Administratively speaking, theirs is the line function. The faculty is responsible for the core activity, *i.e.*, the instruction of students. If the institutional mission also includes the encouragement of the personal development of students, as noted above in the NASPA statement (NASPA, 1987), the student affairs component has a very specific role in its actualization. What may not be as apparent or accepted is the role that student affairs can and often does play in relation to the academic program, defined here as those activities designed to bring about formal learning, *i.e.*, classroom instruction, laboratories, library study, independent research, etc. To this list must then be added a number of areas to which student affairs can make a special educational contribution such as learning effective citizenship, creating learning communities, developing cultural and artistic environments, teaching acceptance of cultural and racial diversity, orienting students to the collegiate way of life, exploring career and leisure options, and involving students in the fabric of student life to mention but a few.

The Idea of Educating the "Whole Student"

While the mission question is difficult to answer in light of the vast scope and diversity represented in American higher education, there are, nevertheless, numerous voices that would agree, at least in part, that one of the major goals of higher education is the full, well-rounded, whole development of students. Although they may not use the phrase, student

development, nor define the concept on the basis of social and behavioral science models alone, their perspective certainly lends support to the idea that the developmental growth of students is a worthy and even critical goal for the higher education enterprise.

Whitehead (1929), in *The Aims of Education and Other Essays*, stated that, "the purpose of education is to stimulate and guide [students] self-development" (p. v). Later in this same collection of essays he reflected on the critical role of wholeness when he added that one

> *"...may not divide the seamless coat of learning. What education has to impart is an intimate sense for the power of ideas, for the beauty of ideas, and for the structure of ideas, together with a particular body of knowledge which has peculiar reference to the life of the being possessing it" (pp. 11-12).*

We also can turn to several seminal documents in the field of student affairs for an early exposition of the idea of educating the whole student. The 1937 statement of the Student Personnel Point of View (American Council on Education [ACE]) accepted as one of the basic purposes of higher education, "the preservation, transmission, and enrichment of the important elements of culture—the product of scholarship, research, creative imagination, and human experience" (p. 1). Colleges and universities are to help students develop their potentialities and make a contribution to society, imposing "upon educational institutions the obligation to consider the student as a whole," and placing emphasis "upon the development of the student as a person rather than upon his [or her] intellectual training alone" (p. 1).

Twelve years later, the copyright page of the 1949 revision of the Student Personnel Point of View (ACE) conveyed its purpose succinctly as "...an interpretation of the philosophy and practices of student personnel work in colleges and universities, the central concern of which is the development

of the student as a whole person" (p. 1). The 1949 version of the Student Personnel Point of View further elaborated that philosophy when it stated that this "concept of education is broadened to include attention to the student's well-rounded development—physically, socially, emotionally and spiritually, as well as intellectually" (p. 1).

Two other works have reiterated this concern for wholeness in the education of students: Boyer's (1987), *College: The Undergraduate Experience in America*, and Pascarella and Terenzini's (1991), *How College Affects Students*. Boyer writes, "The college has an obligation to give students a sense of passage toward a more coherent view of knowledge and a more integrated life...Through an effective college education, students should become personally empowered and also committed to the common good" (pp. 68-69). Pascarella and Terenzini offer the following summation:

> *Historically, America's colleges and universities have had an educational and social mission to "educate" in a sense that extends beyond the cognitive and intellectual development of students. That broader mission has defined education to include increased self-understanding; expansion of personal, intellectual, cultural, and social horizons and interests; liberation from dogma, prejudice, and narrow-mindedness; development of personal moral and ethical standards; preparation for useful and productive employment and membership in a democratic society; and the general enhancement of the quality of graduates' postcollege lives. (p. 162)*

Broadly put, then, the purpose of higher education can be said to be, at least in part, the development of students or "student development". However, in this context what is meant by development is a wholeness that incorporates, and hopefully transcends, all reductionistic categories (*e.g.*, cognitive or affective; physical, emotional, spiritual, social, or intellectual; and/or social-cultural, aesthetic, scientific, or

philosophical-religious) in accordance with that synergy that is the stuff of real education.

In contrast to Whitehead's "seamless coat of learning," today's collegiate environment is, more often than not, more seam than coat. Whether due to the mechanistic premises of scientific determinism in which reality yields to rational thought and analytical dissection or due to the growth of bureaucratization itself, any institutional goals of wholeness are unfortunately implemented through fragmented effort. The campus experience is divided into the classroom and the out-of-classroom; the classroom is divided into courses in the major and general education requirements; the out-of-classroom is divided into formal programs and services and informal activities. Any sense of cohesion or collaboration between the academic faculty and student affairs is difficult to identify if it even exists.

General Education's View of "Wholeness"

Over the past century or longer, there has been common agreement among leaders in education that many of the broad educational goals of higher education are best achieved through the institution's general education program. Whereas the major field of concentration is charged with delivering the experience of study in depth (Association of American Colleges, 1985), the general distribution courses, known collectively as general education, represent the college's view of wholeness. General education consists of that "corpus of knowledge, complement of intellectual skills, and cluster of personal traits and attitudes " (McGrath, 1972, p. 8) that is drawn from the academic disciplines and deemed by the faculty to be essential to living full and effective lives.

A number of educational objectives have been formulated for general education programs including developing the liberally educated citizen, sharpening analytic and critical thinking skills, providing common learnings among students, combating the intellectual fragmentation which all too often accompanies specialization, developing responsible generalists,

and providing students with a more integrated and coherent view of knowledge and life. To implement these objectives, a variety of curricular formats have been devised: the Great Books curriculum, survey courses, integrated studies, tutorials, individual guidance and study, course distribution requirements, the intellectual themes program, and the functional needs approach. Nevertheless, however defined, shaped, and made a part of the undergraduate curriculum, student exposure to the general education experience usually occurs during the first two years, and can be broadly defined as a common intellectual requirement of all students that emphasizes breadth in human experience and knowledge, and the development of intellectual and functional skills.

Thus, in higher education, this substantive view of wholeness is often defined or imbedded, campus-by-campus, within the composite of courses, descriptors, and experiences of the general education agenda. Unfortunately, insofar as this intended wholeness is implemented through fragmented means and often lost in political turf battles, students only rarely sense its purpose. However, students have available another approach to the concept of wholeness in higher education—the student affairs concept and program. The philosophy of the student affairs field also attempts to bring the fragmented elements of student life into a unified approach to out-of-class learning. If there is a place in academe for student affairs collaboration, it may not be in the more narrowly-focused academic disciplines per se but rather in the general education philosophy which attempts to integrate the otherwise departmentalized fragmentation of knowledge.

Student Affairs and Educational Purpose

Education is the raison d'etre of the college and university; it is why institutions of higher learning were invented in the first place and what would remain behind if the many layers of purposes, departments, institutes, and functions were slowly peeled away. This is the core of the higher education mission.

However, as we have pointed out, education can and has been defined broadly and in various ways. The educational philosophy advanced by the field of student affairs has always been comprehensive and, as stated in the Student Personnel Point of View (ACE, 1937, 1949), it has viewed the "students' well-rounded development—physically, socially, emotionally, and spiritually, as well as intellectually" (p. 1) as falling within its definition of educational purpose.

But we believe that student affairs as a field made two strategic mistakes: first, the field erred by considering all aspects of the development of students as being of equal value, *i.e.*, it is just as important to develop students' emotional or physical potential as their intellectual potential (Smith, 1982). This interpretation of the Student Personnel Point of View has often placed student affairs staff at loggerheads with the faculty and the academic arm of the university. It is our thesis that this long-term alienation has been further exacerbated by the uncritical acceptance of the student development model of student affairs which places the personal development of students, in all its aspects, as central to the mission of higher education. As a result, the historic mission of higher education, academic and intellectual development, received short shrift from the student development movement and the student affairs function became further isolated from the academic main stream.

Given the almost unanimous agreement among authorities that higher education needs to affect the total development of students, student affairs made a second mistake in assuming that student development *was* the educational mission (Smith, 1982). It is not. The educational mission is learning—learning not only substantive facts but also values, ethics, an informed way of life, an occupational identity, personal and occupational skills—the list goes on, but the focus is on what is learned, not on what is developed. There is no question, in our thinking, but that the whole institution is or should be involved in the education of its students. It is only the whole institution that can frame a learning environment that can

affect the education of the whole student. Student affairs' task should be not only to facilitate that process but to make its own substantive contributions to it as well.

Over forty years ago, Mueller (1951), in a major textbook for student affairs, noted that, "Common to all institutions of higher learning is a concern with knowledge" (p.4). Echoing the Student Personnel Point of View (ACE, 1949), Mueller acknowledged the centrality of the creation, preservation, and transmission of knowledge within the institution and placed student affairs work in a supportive relationship with the achievement of the academic mission. Much the same point was made by Williamson (1951), the chairperson of the ACE committee that wrote the Student Personnel Point of View, in his textbook published the same year. Mueller and Williamson both viewed the entire panoply of student affairs services and educational activities as complementing, supplementing, and supporting classroom instruction in a broad, dynamic, and creative way. Residence life, cocurricular programs, student unions and centers, Greek life, and a host of specialized services were viewed as contributing to the holistic education of students, especially when they could be directly related to the intentional learnings of the curriculum, instruction, research, and other college sponsored activities. They perceived a coherence or congruity between classroom and out-of-class life that was absolutely necessary if the collegiate institution was to have its optimum effect upon the education of students.

In this chapter we have summarized our extensive analysis of the student development movement and model in student affairs, examined the mission and purpose of higher education vis-a-vis its students, and looked briefly at the way in which the academic mission is implemented. It is our contention that, given the contingencies we have described, it is imperative that the field of student affairs reconsider its role in higher education. Its current trajectory, we believe, has not been productive and, if continued, will lead inevitably to the further isolation and trivialization of its role.

A New/Old Direction for Student Affairs

In our critique we have frequently criticized the field of student affairs, particularly as it has been influenced by the student development model, for straying too far from its original concern for the educational mission of higher education. Having rejected the student development model, it is incumbent upon us to suggest alternatives that can provide the field with the necessary redirection it needs at this juncture.

We propose that the student affairs profession again take its cue from the central educational mission of higher education and view the learning process as integral to the implementation of that mission. As Allen and Garb (1993) said recently, "The Student Personnel Point of View implies that learning in all its forms is at the center of the educational enterprise" (p. 97). Student affairs should continue to be concerned about the whole student, of course, since that concern has been the centerpiece of its philosophy of higher education for over fifty years; but rather than assuming equality of all aspects of a student's development, the field should give increased attention to academic and intellectual development, to the learning environment and to the educational process.

The role of student affairs, however, should be more than simply the support of the academic mission, whether in the general education program or the whole teaching enterprise. A purely supportive role fails to acknowledge that, given a holistic philosophy of education, student affairs can make a unique contribution to the academic mission. This is not to say that its contribution is equally important in all respects. It clearly is not. But student affairs just as surely has an educational role to play, one that is unique in many respects, but one which, nevertheless, contributes essential elements to any academic philosophy and program that seeks to integrate the fragmented elements that constitute the modern college or university.

Recommendations for Redirection.

We are not in any way attempting to write a whole new rationale for student affairs; that is a task best left to the several professional groups that represent it. Instead we have deliberately focused our attention on the educational mission of higher education, urging that student affairs make its own singular contribution to that mission as an educational force in the cocurriculum and, where feasible, in the academic program as well. We have enumerated a set of recommendations below that we believe ought to be considered by individual practitioners, by campus student affairs organizations, and by national professional associations as each thinks about the mission of student affairs in higher education:

1. Cease identifying with the student development model as the well-spring or philosophical underpinning of the field of student affairs. Practitioners should continue to employ student development theory as a conceptual model or tool which can be used to enhance the educational potency of teaching, the curriculum, and the cocurriculum. However, we urge that the jargon-laden vocabulary and scientific pretensions of the student development movement be modified or discarded.
2. Return to the general principles so cogently expressed in the Student Personnel Point of View (ACE, 1949), clearly placing academic and intellectual development at the center of the student affairs mission.
3. Re-emphasize the primacy of learning as the cardinal value of higher education and employ learning theory, conjointly with student development theory, as an essential tool for planning experiences and programs that will enhance the learning process.
4. Clearly identify with the institutional educational mission for unless student affairs takes its cue from the mission and goals of higher education, it has no function except the provision of support services; any educational outcomes it may claim are purely accidental. Look

particularly to the campus general education program for the educational philosophy and curriculum that is most closely aligned with the student affairs concern for the education of the whole student.

5. Seek ways to participate more fully in the academic life of the parent college or university, distinctly identifying the contribution that student affairs can and does make to implementing institutional educational purposes. Recognizing that its role in effecting wide-spread campus change is relatively limited, student affairs staff should nevertheless search out every opportunity for collaboration and involvement with faculty and the academic program as well as seeking to extend its own unique educational role through the cocurriculum.

Implications for Practice

The redirection of the mission of student affairs that we have suggested has a number of implications for the professional field as a whole, for the campus unit charged with the administration of the student affairs function, and for the way in which individual practitioners relate to the field. Without attempting an exhaustive inventory of possibilities, we have suggested several that may help to illustrate our intent.

Implications for the Professional Field

If the professional field of student affairs is to react appropriately to our suggested reorientation, there will need to be changes in the content of its professional preparation programs, publications, and conference programs.

Preparation programs.

The guidelines for master's level graduate preparation programs adopted by the Council for the Advancement of Standards for Student Services/Development Programs (CAS) (1986, pp. 101-109), would require few changes and those few primarily in the Student Development Program Emphasis section (p. 105). For example, surprisingly little attention

appears to have been given to the theories and processes of learning in the curriculum of student affairs training programs although the field has been concerned with educational purposes even before the publication of the early Student Personnel Point of View (1937). An obvious curricular addition, therefore, would be the inclusion of a course or courses on learning theory and process. If student affairs staff members are to facilitate student learning through the design of programs or in collaboration with faculty members, it is important that they know how learning takes place, the types of problems faced by students in learning situations, and how learning theory can be applied to educational practice, both in the classroom and in the voluntary setting of the cocurriculum.

While courses in higher education have been featured in the curriculum of many, if not most, student affairs preparation programs, they have often been attenuated by the inclusion of student affairs functions, a topic that deserves a course of its own. Student affairs aspirants need to know the historical, legal, organizational, cultural, philosophical, and political context within which the institution and, by extension, the student affairs program must conduct its business. There must be a clear exposition of the mission assigned to higher education by society and of how higher education institutions have organized to implement that mission. This course offering also should include material on the philosophy and scope of general education as well as its goals and curriculum. Complementary course work might include a consideration of the learning environment of higher education, the history of higher education, or of the philosophy and organization of the community college movement for those headed for a career in the community college field. Course work that focuses on the adult learner also would be valuable depending upon the specificity of the content.

Student development theory would continue to be taught, of course, but, rather than treating student development as the principal rationale of the student affairs program, the emphasis should change to a consideration of how student

development theory can be employed, along with learning theory, as a tool for better understanding the developmental patterns of students, for enhancing student learning, or for meeting student developmental needs. Developmental theory would be taught as complementary to the institutional educational mission and not with development as the end product.

Coordinators of professional preparation programs in student affairs also might utilize faculty from the general education program and the academic disciplines as guest lecturers or to teach in their graduate program. It would be important for student affairs professionals to better understand the world of the faculty member (Bloland, 1992), the nature of the disciplinary curricula, and characteristic teaching approaches and models, as well as something of the substance of the various disciplines incorporated within the general education curriculum.

Conference and workshop programs.

The titles and substance of some convention themes and programs should begin to reflect the changes dictated by a re-emphasis of student affairs' contribution to the educational mission and goals of higher education. Continuing professional education workshops and mini-conferences may be useful in assisting current staff members to understand the emerging educational role and, given the new parameters, in learning how to program effectively.

Publications.

The professional literature, as well, should begin to reflect the thinking and research of those who seek to convey the substance of the reorientation we are advocating. For example, it would be interesting and useful to publish reports from student affairs professionals and faculty who have collaborated in developing successful cocurricular programs that have complemented and supported the formal academic classroom program. It may be appropriate to solicit contributions from teaching faculty and academic administrators who have

thought constructively about the role of student affairs in the intellectual and cultural life of the campus. Manuals and monographs would need to be prepared to assist staff in the development of a scholarly understanding of general education and the educative aspects of the cocurriculum, equipping them to plan and execute campus programs that would complement the work of the faculty and support the educational mission of the institution.

Implications for Student Affairs Programs

The campus program of student services will most assuredly be affected by subscribing to the renewed concern with the intellectual life of the institution that we are advocating. Just as the classroom and laboratory constitute the principal venue for academic programming, the delivery system for the student affairs area is comprised of the various services and programs through which it, too, seeks to accomplish its educational goals.

Program content.

The most significant change, of course, would be related to the content of the campus student affairs program. Without neglecting or minimizing their mandate for educating the whole student, the staff should seek opportunities to shape and nurture a campus environment which reinforces and is reflective of the intellectual and cultural life of the institution. When choices are made, those in charge should choose the program or direction that tends to bridge the gap between the curriculum and the cocurriculum, keeping ever in mind the educational goals of the institution. Student affairs staff may be required to work closely with faculty to devise ways in which certain extracurricular activities can be employed to complement and supplement classroom content as an on-campus laboratory (*e.g.*, campus judicial systems as political science experiments, roommate relationships as interpersonal communication models, daily choices as opportunities to explore philosophical concepts, ethical dilemmas in personal

relationships, etc.). Student leadership training would incorporate the leader's responsibility for maintaining the group's congruence with institutional educational goals.

Staff development.

As with student leadership training, it would be important for the chief student affairs officer (CSAO) to make certain that staff members are familiar with the educational goals of their college or university and to help them devise ways to achieve those goals in their everyday work with students and student organizations. The extent to which the student affairs division can affect the campus environment will depend in part on how well division leadership confirms its support of educational goals through staff training programs, program and staff evaluation, supervisory attention, and personal modeling.

Academic community.

The student affairs division will need to find ways to assist its staff members to participate more fully in the academic and intellectual life of the campus so that the division itself will gradually become better integrated within the institutional educational mission. Student affairs units have been notorious in their tendency to become inward-looking and isolated, their staff people not well known among other administrators and the faculty. The division will need to make clear its expectations that staff become involved outside of the unit and to make time available for participation on institution-wide committees, faculty committees, in joint teaching appointments, and other activities as well as attendance at campus scholarly and cultural events. Not only must time be made available, but the division leadership will need to foster participation by identifying appropriate areas for student affairs involvement, and by encouraging staff to become active in these areas.

At the same time, the student affairs division will need to reach out aggressively to involve the teaching faculty in its programs and activities. Faculty should have an opportunity

to have direct experience with the efforts being made by the student affairs division to develop and extend its contribution to the educational goals of the institution. There is a significant benefit in increasing faculty understanding of the role and mission of student affairs through positive experiences and involvement. Faculty can participate in most divisional programs but may be most usefully involved in staff development activities, program planning, policy development, and the like (Bloland, 1991, pp. 36-41). For example, faculty could be tendered part-time appointments to student affairs to contribute their knowledge and expertise about general education to staff development and to the planning of co-curricular and educational programs that would complement and support classroom activities.

Organizational structure.

Finally, a reorientation of the student affairs function that de-emphasizes student development may eventuate in some related structural modifications. Because the term, "student development," should not be construed as synonymous with the student affairs or student services function, titles such as vice president or dean of student development or department or division of student development would no longer be appropriate and should be converted to eliminate erroneous expectations. We would anticipate, however, that very few alterations beyond the cosmetic, would need to take place. Most changes would occur in the areas of staff development and training, in the purpose of program activities, and in the graduate preparation background of people who are employed for student affairs responsibilities.

Implications for Personal Development

There is much that individual practitioners can do to enhance their knowledge about higher and general education, learning and developmental theory, and other disciplinary foci from outside of the professional field of student affairs. Not only should individuals read more widely in the literature of

higher education, they can further extend their knowledge through attendance at workshops and conventions.

We also want to re-emphasize the need for student affairs staff who intend to interact with the academic program, as we suggested earlier, to educate themselves more broadly—not with the purpose of transforming themselves into subject-matter specialists but because professional education courses alone may to too self-limiting, too narrow in scope for the professional who intends to engage effectively with the faculty in broadening the scope of the institution's educational agenda.

As suggested earlier, student affairs staff also should make every effort to become personally involved in the intellectual, cultural, and academic life of the campus. To do so would require that individuals take the initiative to join university-wide or faculty committees, particularly those relating to academic affairs; to join the faculty club; to eat lunch in the faculty dining room; to teach in an academic department; and to attend campus receptions, open houses, lectures, seminars, and concerts. In short, it becomes more important than ever that student affairs staff members not isolate themselves in the relatively circumscribed world of student affairs, but seek opportunities, not only to mingle and be seen in campus-wide venues but also to be identified as contributing to the cultural and intellectual environment of the campus.

Summary and Conclusions

Our intent in this monograph has been to focus attention on the promise and failings of the student development model as a raison d'etre for the field of student affairs and to stress the need for returning once more to a clear identification of the student affairs mission with the primary over-arching mission of higher education consistent with the Student Personnel Point of View (ACE, 1949). As we have pointed out, not only has the student development movement failed in most respects to fulfill its early promise, it has been based upon a faulty premise, *i.e.*, that student growth and development is the central purpose of higher education. We disagree with that

position. Development will occur with or without higher education, and the available evidence fails to support the contention of the student development model that a developmental intervention will accentuate or accelerate that development. As we have argued, within the world of higher education, only student affairs people bought into that premise with the result that student development as a successful reform movement within student affairs has become more and more irrelevant to the rest of higher education.

This is not at all to say that the concept of student development itself is irrelevant to higher education. On the contrary, even the Student Personnel Point of View (ACE, 1949) states that "the concept of education is broadened to include attention to the student's well-rounded development..." (p. 1). More recently, Pascarella and Terenzini (1991) and Astin (1993) have pointed out the usefulness of developmental theory in achieving the goals of higher education. But, we hasten to reiterate, a view of educational wholeness derived solely from developmental theory is not the primary goal of higher education. Rather, an understanding of student development theory and processes provides a significant means by which we can more effectively facilitate the broader, more integrated, goal of educational development as defined within general education and sought by educators within student affairs and the faculty ranks.

Believing that the purpose of higher education is not student development per se but the development of the whole person including, of course, intellectual ability and educational achievement, we have called for a reconsideration of the dominant student development paradigm. To put it succinctly, we have recommended: (a) that the field cease its identification with the student development model as the core of the profession; (b) that student affairs return to the principles of the Student Personnel Point of View, placing academic and intellectual development at the center of its role; (c) that the field re-emphasize learning as a cardinal value, using learning

theory and student development theory as important tools to be employed in the facilitation of learning; (d) that the student affairs division clearly identify with the institutional educational mission, particularly the philosophy and curriculum of general education; and (e) that student affairs staff seek to participate more fully in the academic and intellectual life of the parent institution.

Our intent in this final chapter is not to present a fully-developed model nor to foreclose further exploration but, rather, to stimulate thinking and debate regarding what we believe to be an appropriate re-direction of student affairs at this juncture. We have alluded to a only a few of the implications, benefits, and problems that may attend the implementation of our thesis. This chapter, therefore, is not a conclusion. It is, instead, the initiation of what we hope will be a dialogue, the kind of debate and discussion that did not occur as student development, the most recent student affairs reform movement, swept through the field. Perhaps such discussion will lead to some agreements about the philosophy of the field; the role and place of theory; the content of professional preparation and professional development, its curriculum, and its methodology; and the function of student affairs in the educational mission of higher education. Certainly, we could not hope for more.

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This monograph provides an intensive examination of the student development movement in college student affairs. Three highly knowledgeable professional leaders offer a searching analysis of student development concepts and practices. It is a "necessary and long overdue response to the uncritical and bandwagon reception" which has characterized the response to the student development movement. The authors' cogent analysis of student development, from theory and research to current practices and outcomes, is stimulating and rewarding. In a compelling concluding chapter the authors suggest a redirection for the role of student affairs in American higher education which addresses the inadequacies of the student development approach while acknowledging its many contributions. Paramount in the proposed redirection is a clear identification with the educational mission of institutions and a focus on the facilitation of learning. Not content with offering a critique, the authors propose many practical and useful approaches for bringing about needed changes. Few publications in higher education offer so much of worth to the practitioner and scholar in so few words!

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